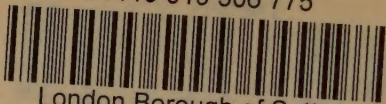


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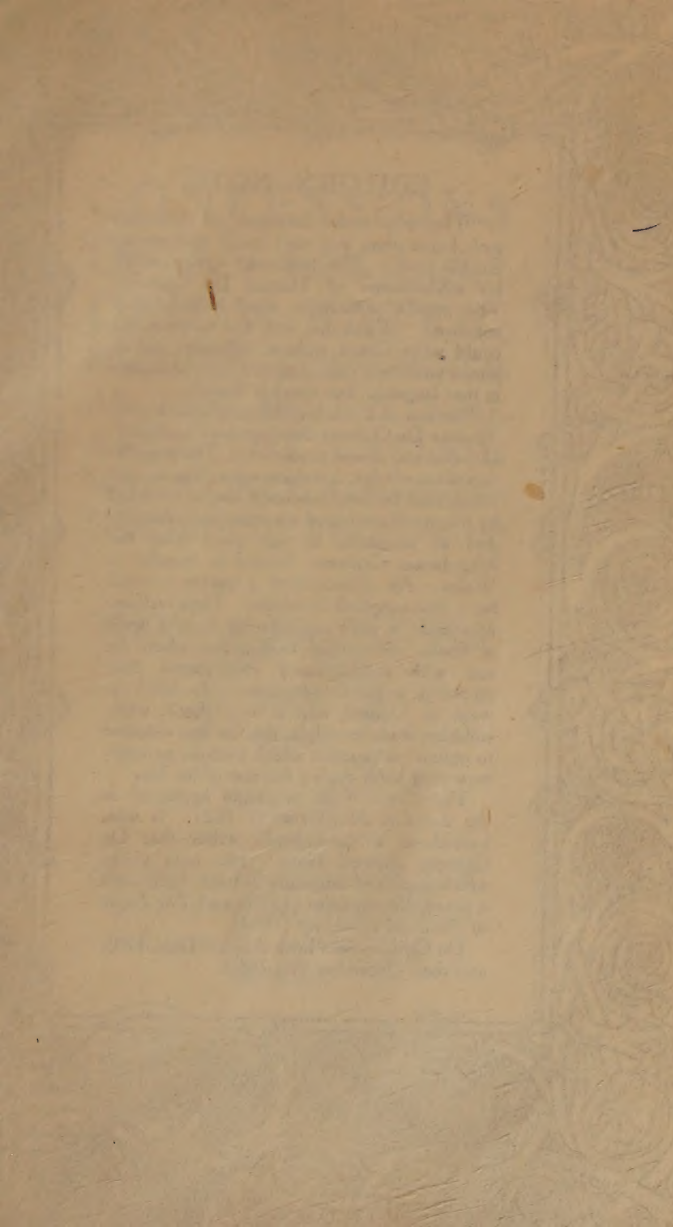
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THE OPIUM EATER
AND OTHER WRITINGS

THOMAS DE QUINCEY



EDITOR'S NOTE

"That boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one." The testimony was given by his schoolmaster of Thomas De Quincey. The pupil's proficiency was, indeed, phenomenal. When he was but thirteen he could write Greek without difficulty, and at fifteen could not only compose lyric measures in that language, but speak it fluently.

The son of a wealthy Manchester draper, Thomas De Quincey developed an intellectuality that was almost precocious. The acquisition of knowledge, therefore, was to him an easy matter, but the long scholastic course enforced by his guardians jarred upon his temperament, and at seventeen he ran away from the Manchester Grammar School to wander in Wales. An allowance of a guinea a week for a time supplied his wants. Then restlessness and "a grievous suffering from a want of books" drove him to London, where he met with extraordinary experiences duly recorded in his *Confessions*. In 1803 he went to Oxford, and it was there, while suffering from neuralgia, that he first resorted to opium—a practice which became an overmastering habit during the rest of his life.

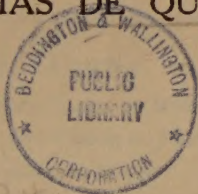
The *Confessions* originally appeared in the *London Magazine* in 1821. It was, indeed, as a "periodical" writer that De Quincey attained fame. His only works which appeared originally in book form were a novel, *Klosterheim* (1839), and *The Logic of Political Economy* (1844).

De Quincey was born August 15th, 1785, and died December 8th, 1859.

CONFESSIONS
OF AN ENGLISH
OPIUM-EATER:
MURDER CONSIDERED
AS ONE OF THE FINE
ARTS, THE ENGLISH
MAIL-COACH, & a Selection from
SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

BY

THOMAS DE QUINCEY



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CONFESSIONS
OF AN ENGLISH
OPUM-EATER
MURDER CONSIDERED
AS ONE OF THE
ARTS OF THE ENGLISH
MAN COACHMAN
IN THE
THEMS OF VIOLENCE

132487

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CONFESSIONS
OF AN
ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER

ORIGINAL PREFACE IN THE YEAR 1821 *

I HERE present you, courteous reader, with the record of a remarkable period of my life ; and according to my application of it, I trust that it will prove, not merely an interesting record, but, in a considerable degree, instructive. In *that* hope, it is that I have drawn it up ; and *that* must be my apology for breaking through those restraints of delicate reserve, which, for the most part, intercept the public exposure of our own errors and infirmities.

Guilt and misery shrink, by a natural instinct, from public notice : they court privacy and solitude ; and, even in the choice of a grave, will sometimes voluntarily sequester themselves from the general population of the churchyard, as if declining to claim fellowship with the great family of man ; thus, in a symbolic language universally understood, seeking (in the affecting language of Wordsworth) -

“ humbly to express
A penitential loneliness.”

It is well, upon the whole, and for the interest of us all, that it should be so ; nor would I willingly, in my own person, manifest a disregard of such salutary feelings. But, on the one hand, as my self-accusation does not amount to a confession of guilt, so, on the other, it is possible that, if it did, the benefit resulting to others, from the record of an experience purchased at so heavy a price of suffering and of self-conquest, might compensate, by a vast overbalance, any violence done to the feelings I have noticed, and justify a breach of the general rule. Infirmity and misery do not, of necessity, imply guilt. They approach, or recede from, the shades of that dark alliance, in proportion to the probable motives and prospects of the offender, and to the palliations, known or secret, of the offence ; in proportion as the temptations to it were potent from the first, and as the resistance to it, in act or in effort, was earnest to the last. For my own part, without breach

of truth or modesty, I may affirm that my life has been, on the whole, the life of a philosopher: from my birth, I was made an intellectual creature; and intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been, even from my schoolboy days. If opium-eating be a sensual pleasure, and if I am bound to confess that I have indulged in it to an excess not yet *recorded* of any other man, it is no less true that I have struggled against this fascination with a fervent zeal, and have at length accomplished what I never yet heard attributed to any other man, having untwisted, almost to its final links, the chain which fettered me. Such a self-conquest may reasonably be set off in counterbalance to any kind or degree of self-indulgence. Not to insist that, in my case, the self-conquest was unquestionable, but the self-indulgence open to doubts of casuistry, according as that name shall be extended to acts aiming at the bare relief of pain, or shall be restricted to such as aim at the excitement of superfluous pleasure.

Guilt, therefore, I do not acknowledge; and, if I did, it is possible that I might still resolve on the present act of confession, in consideration of the service which I may thereby render to the whole class of opium-eaters. But who are they? Reader, I am bound to say, a very numerous class indeed. Of this I became convinced, some years ago, by computing, at that time, the number of those in one small class of English society (the class of men distinguished for talent and notoriety) who were known to me, directly or indirectly, as opium-eaters; such, for instance, as the eloquent and benevolent William Wilberforce; the late Dean of Carlisle, Dr. Isaac Milner; *

* "*Isaac Milner*":—He was *nominally* known to the public as Dean of Carlisle, being colloquially always called *Dean Milner*; but virtually he was best known in his own circle as the head of Queen's College, Cambridge, where he usually resided. In common with his brother, Joseph of Hull, he was substantially a Wesleyan Methodist; and in that character, as regarded principles and the general direction of his sympathies, he pursued his deceased brother's History of the Christian Church down to the era of Luther. In these days, he would perhaps not be styled a Methodist, but simply a Low-Churchman. By whatever title described, it is meantime remarkable that a man confessedly so conscientious as Dean Milner could have reconciled to his moral views the holding of church preferment so important as this deanery in combination with the headship of an important college. One or other must have been consciously neglected. Such a record, meantime, powerfully illustrates the advances made by the Church during the last generation in practical homage to self-denying religious scruples. A very lax man would not in these days allow himself to do that which thirty years ago a severe Church-Methodist (regarded by many even

the first Lord Erskine ; Mr. —, * the philosopher ; a late under-secretary of state (viz., Mr. Addington, brother to

as a fanatic) persisted in doing, without feeling himself called on for apology. If I have not misapprehended its tenor, this case serves most vividly to illustrate the higher standard of moral responsibility which prevails in this current generation. We do injustice daily to our own age, which, by many a sign, palpable and secret, I feel to be more emphatically, than any since the period of Queen Elizabeth and Charles I., an intellectual, a moving, and a self-conflicting age : and inevitably, where the intellect has been preternaturally awakened, the moral sensibility must soon be commensurately stirred. The very distinctions, psychologic or metaphysical, by which, as its hinges and articulations, our modern thinking moves, proclaim the subtler character of the questions which now occupy our thoughts. Not as pedantic only, but as suspiciously unintelligible, such distinctions would, one hundred and thirty years ago, have been viewed as indictable ; and perhaps (in company with Mandeville's "Political Economy") would have been seriously presented as a nuisance to the Middlesex Quarter-Sessions. Recurring, however, to Dean Milner, and the recollections of his distinguished talents amongst the contemporary circles of the first generation in this nineteenth century, I wish to mention that these talents are most feebly measured by any of his occasional writings, all drawn from him apparently by mere pressure of casual convenience. In conversation it was that he asserted *adequately* his pre-eminent place. Wordsworth, who met him often at the late Lord Lonsdale's table, spoke of him uniformly as the chief potentate colloquially of his own generation, and as the man beyond all others (Burke being departed) who did not live upon his recollections, but met the demands of every question that engaged his sympathy by spontaneous and elastic movements of novel and original thought. As an opium-eater, Dean Milner was understood to be a strenuous wrestler with the physical necessity that coerced him into this habit. From several quarters I have heard that his daily *ration* was 34 grains (or about 850 drops of laudanum,) divided into four portions, and administered to him at regular intervals of six hours by a confidential valet.

* Who is Mr. Dash, the philosopher ? Really I have forgot. Not through any fault of my own, but on the motion of some absurd coward having a voice potential at the press, all the names were struck out behind my back in the first edition of the book, thirty-five years ago. I was not consulted ; and did not discover the absurd blanks until months afterwards, when I was taunted with them very reasonably by a caustic reviewer. Nothing could have a more ludicrous effect than this appeal to shadows—to my Lord Dash, to Dean Dash, and to Mr. Secretary Dash. Very naturally it thus happened to Mr. Philosopher Dash that his burning light, alas ! was extinguished irrecoverably in the general *mêlée*. Meantime, there was no excuse whatever for this absurd interference such as might have been alleged in any personality capable of causing pain to any one person concerned. All the cases, except, perhaps, that of Wilberforce (about which I have at this moment some slight lingering doubts), were matters of notoriety to large circles of friends. It is due to Mr. John Taylor, the accomplished publisher of the work, that I should acquit *him* of any share in this absurdity.

the first Lord Sidmouth, who described to me the sensation which first drove him to the use of opium in the very same words as the Dean of Carlisle—viz., “that he felt as though rats were gnawing at the coats of his stomach”); Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and many others hardly less celebrated. Now, if one class, comparatively so limited, could furnish so many scores of cases (and those within the instant reach of one sudden and brief inquiry), it was a natural inference, that the entire population of England would furnish a number that, on first starting in such an inquiry, would have seemed incredible. The soundness of this inference, however, I doubted, until some facts became known to me, which satisfied me that it was not incorrect. I will mention two. First, three respectable London druggists, in widely remote quarters of London, from whom I happened to be purchasing small quantities of opium, assured me that the number of *amateur* opium-eaters (as I may term them) was at this time immense; and that the difficulty of distinguishing these persons, to whom habit had rendered opium necessary, from such as were purchasing it with a view to suicide, occasioned them daily trouble and disputes. This evidence respected London only. But, secondly (which will possibly surprise the reader more), some years ago, on passing through Manchester, I was informed by several cotton manufacturers, that their work-people were rapidly getting into the practice of opium-eating; so much so, that on a Saturday afternoon the counters of the druggists were strewn with pills of one, two, or three grains, in preparation for the known demand of the evening. The immediate occasion of this practice was the lowness of wages, which at that time would not allow them to indulge in ale or spirits; and, wages rising, it may be thought that this practice would cease: but, as I do not readily believe that any man, having once tasted the divine luxuries of opium, will afterwards descend to the gross and mortal enjoyments of alcohol, I take it for granted

“That those eat now who never ate before;
And those who always ate, now eat the more.”

Indeed, the fascinating powers of opium are admitted even by those medical writers who are its greatest enemies: thus, for instance, Awsiter, apothecary to Greenwich Hospital, in his “Essay on the Effects of Opium” (published in the year 1763), when attempting to explain why Mead had not been sufficiently explicit on the properties, counter-

agents, etc., of this drug, expresses himself in the following mysterious terms (perfectly intelligible, however, to those who are in the secret):—"Perhaps he thought the subject of too delicate a nature to be made common; and, as many people might then indiscriminately use it, it would take from that necessary fear and caution which should prevent their experiencing the extensive power of this drug; *for there are many properties in it, if universally known, that would habituate the use, and make it more in request with us than the Turks themselves*; the result of which knowledge," he adds, "must prove a general misfortune." In the necessity of this conclusion I do not at all concur; but upon that point I shall have occasion to speak more freely in the body of the work itself. And at this point I shall say no more than that opium, as the one sole *catholic* anodyne which hitherto has been revealed to man; secondly, as the one sole anodyne which in a vast majority of cases is *irresistible*; thirdly, as by many degrees the most potent of all known counter-agents to nervous irritation, and to the formidable curse of *tædium vitæ*; fourthly, as by possibility, under an argument undeniably plausible, alleged by myself, the sole known agent—not for curing *when* formed, but for intercepting whilst likely to be formed—the great English scourge of pulmonary consumption;—I say that opium, as wearing these, or *any* of these, four beneficent characteristics—I say that any agent whatever making good such pretensions, no matter what its name, is entitled haughtily to refuse the ordinary classification and treatment which opium receives in books. I say that opium, or any agent of equal power, is entitled to assume that it was revealed to man for some higher object than that it should furnish a target for moral denunciations, ignorant where they are not hypocritical, childish where not dishonest; that it should be set up as a theatrical scarecrow for superstitious terrors, of which the *result* is oftentimes to defraud human suffering of its readiest alleviation, and of which the *purpose* is, "*Ut pueris placeant et declamatio fiant.*" *

In one sense, and remotely, all medicines and modes of medical treatment offer themselves as anodynes—that is, so far as they promise ultimately to relieve the suffering connected with physical maladies or infirmities. But we do not, in the special and ordinary sense, designate as

* That they may win the applause of schoolboys, and furnish matter for a prize essay.

“anodynes” those remedies which obtain the relief from pain only as a secondary and distant effect following out from the *cure* of the ailment; but those only we call anodynes which obtain this relief, and pursue it as the *primary* and *immediate* object. If, by giving tonics to a child suffering periodic pains in the stomach, we were ultimately to banish those pains, this would not warrant us in calling such tonics by the name of anodynes: for the neutralisation of the pains would be a circuitous process of nature, and might probably require weeks for its evolution. But a true anodyne (as, for instance, half-a-dozen drops of laudanum, or a dessert-spoonful of some warm carminative mixed with brandy) will often banish the misery suffered by a child in five or six minutes. Amongst the most potent of anodynes, we may rank hemlock, henbane, chloroform, and opium. But unquestionably the three first have a most narrow field of action, by comparison with opium. This, beyond all other agents made known to man, is the mightiest for its command, and for the extent of its command, over pain; and so much mightier than any other, that I should think, in a Pagan land, supposing it to have been adequately made known* through experimental acquaintance with its revolutionary magic, opium would have had altars and priests consecrated to its benign and tutelary powers. But this is not my own object in the present little work. Very many people have thoroughly misconstrued this object; and therefore I beg to say here, in closing my Original Preface, a little remodelled, that what I contemplated in these Confessions was to emblazon the power of opium—not over bodily disease and pain, but over the grander and more shadowy world of dreams.

* “*Adequately made known*”:—Precisely this, however, was impossible. No feature of ancient Pagan life has more entirely escaped notice than the extreme rarity, costliness, and circuitous accessibility of the more powerful drugs, especially of mineral drugs; and of drugs requiring elaborate preparation, or requiring much manufacturing skill. When the process of obtaining any manufactured drug was slow and intricate, it could most rarely be called for. And rarely called for, why should it be produced? By looking into the history and times of Herod the Great, as reported by Josephus, the reader will gain some notion of the mystery and the suspicion surrounding all attempts at importing such drugs as could be applied to murderous purposes, consequently of the delay, the difficulty, and the peril in forming any familiar acquaintance with opium.

PREFATORY NOTICE

TO THE ENLARGED EDITION OF 1856

WHEN it had been settled that, in the general series of these publications, the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" should occupy the Fifth Volume, I resolved to avail myself most carefully of the opening thus made for a revision of the entire work. By accident, a considerable part of the Confessions (all, in short, except the Dreams) had originally been written hastily; and, from various causes, had never received any strict revision, or, *virtually*, so much as an ordinary verbal correction. But a great deal more was wanted than this. The main narrative should naturally have moved through a succession of secondary incidents; and with leisure for recalling these, it might have been greatly inspirited. Wanting all opportunity for such advantages, this narrative had been needlessly impoverished. And thus it had happened, that not so properly correction and retrenchment were called for, as integration of what had been left imperfect, or amplification of what, from the first, had been insufficiently expanded.

With these views, it would not have been difficult (though toilsome) to re-cast the little work in a better mould; and the result might, in all reason, count upon the approbation at least of its own former readers. Compared with its own former self, the book must certainly tend, by its very principle of change, whatever should be the *execution* of that change, to become better: and in my own opinion, after all drawbacks and allowances for the faulty exemplification of a good principle, it is better. This should be a matter of mere logical or inferential necessity; since, in pure addition to everything previously approved, there would now be a clear surplus of extra matter—all that might be good in the old work, and a great deal beside that was new. Meantime this improvement has been won at a price of labour and suffering that, if they could be

truly stated, would seem incredible. A nervous malady, of very peculiar character, which has attacked me intermittingly for the last eleven years, came on in May last, almost concurrently with the commencement of this revision; and so obstinately has this malady pursued its noiseless, and what I may call subterraneous, siege, since none of the symptoms are externally manifested, that, although pretty nearly dedicating myself to this one solitary labour, and not intermitting or relaxing it for a single day, I have yet spent, within a very few days, six calendar months upon the re-cast of this one small volume.

The consequences have been distressing to all concerned. The press has groaned under the chronic visitation; the compositors shudder at the sight of my handwriting, though not objectionable on the score of legibility; and I have much reason to fear that, on days when the pressure of my complaint has been heaviest, I may have so far given way to it, as to have suffered greatly in clearness of critical vision. Sometimes I may have overlooked blunders, mis-statements, or repetitious, implicit or even express. But more often I may have failed to appreciate the true effects from faulty management of style and its colourings. Sometimes, for instance, a heavy or too intricate arrangement of sentences may have defeated the tendency of what, under its natural presentation, would have been affecting; or it is possible enough that, by unseasonable levity at other times, I may have repelled the sympathy of my readers—all or some. Endless are the openings for such kinds of mistake—that is, of mistakes not fully seen as such. But even in a case of unequivocal mistake, seen and acknowledged, yet when it is open to remedy only through a sudden and energetic act, then or never, the press being for twenty minutes, suppose, free to receive an alteration, but beyond that time closed and sealed inexorably: such being supposed the circumstances, the humane reader will allow for the infirmity which even wilfully and consciously surrenders itself to the error, acquiescing in it deliberately, rather than face the cruel exertion of correcting it most elaborately at a moment of sickening misery, and with the prevision that the main correction must draw after it half-a-dozen others for the sake of decent consistency. I am not speaking under any present consciousness of such a case existing against myself: I believe there is none such. But I choose to suppose an extreme case of even conscious error, in order that venial

cases of oversight may, under shelter of such an outside license, find toleration from a liberal critic. To fight up against the wearing siege of an abiding sickness, imposes a fiery combat. I attempt no description of this combat, knowing the unintelligibility and the repulsiveness of all attempts to communicate the Incommunicable. But the generous reader will not, for that forbearance on my part, the less readily show his indulgence, if a case should (unexpectedly to myself) arise for claiming it.

I have thus made the reader acquainted with one out of two cross currents that tended to thwart my efforts for improving this little work. There was, meantime, another, less open to remedy from my own uttermost efforts. All along I had relied upon a crowning grace, which I had reserved for the final pages of this volume, in a succession of some twenty or twenty-five dreams and noon-day visions, which had arisen under the latter stages of opium influence. These have disappeared : some under circumstances which allow me a reasonable prospect of recovering them ; some unaccountably ; and some dishonourably. Five or six, I believe, were burned in a sudden conflagration which arose from a spark of a candle falling unobserved amongst a very large pile of papers in a bedroom, when I was alone and reading. Falling not *on*, but *amongst* and *within* the papers, the fire would soon have been ahead of conflict ; and, by communicating with the slight wood-work and draperies of a bed, it would have immediately enveloped the laths of a ceiling overhead, and thus the house, far from fire-engines, would have been burned down in half-an-hour. My attention was first drawn by a sudden light upon my book : and the whole difference between a total destruction of the premises and a trivial loss (from books charred) of five guineas, was due to a large Spanish cloak. This, thrown over, and then drawn down tightly, by the aid of one sole person, somewhat agitated, but retaining her presence of mind, effectually extinguished the fire. Amongst the papers burned partially, but not so burned as to be absolutely irretrievable, was the “ Daughter of Lebanon ” ; and this I have printed, and have intentionally placed it at the end, as appropriately closing a record in which the case of poor Ann the Outcast formed not only the most memorable and the most suggestively pathetic incident, but also *that* which, more than any other, coloured—or (more truly I should say) shaped, moulded and remoulded, composed and decomposed—the great body of opium

dreams. The search after the lost features of Ann, which I spoke of as pursued in the crowds of London, was in a more proper sense pursued through many a year in dreams. The general idea of a search and a chase reproduced itself in many shapes. The person, the rank, the age, the scenical position, all varied themselves for ever ; but the same leading traits more or less faintly remained of a lost Pariah woman, and of some shadowy malice which withdrew her, or attempted to withdraw her, from restoration and from hope. Such is the explanation which I offer why that particular addition, which some of my friends had been authorised to look for, has not in the main been given, nor for the present *could* be given ; and, secondly, why that part which *is* given has been placed in the conspicuous situation (as a closing passage) which it now occupies.

November, 1856

CONFESSIONS

OF AN

ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER

FIRST PART

I HAVE often been asked—how it was, and through what series of steps, that I became an opium-eater. Was it gradually, tentatively, mistrustingly, as one goes down a shelving beach into a deepening sea, and with a knowledge from the first of the dangers lying on that path; half-courting those dangers, in fact, while seeming to defy them? Or was it, secondly, in pure ignorance of such dangers, under the misleadings of mercenary fraud? Since oftentimes lozenges, for the relief of pulmonary affections, found their efficacy upon the opium which they contain, upon this, and this only, though clamorously disavowing so suspicious an alliance: and under such treacherous disguises, multitudes are seduced into a dependency which they had not foreseen upon a drug which they had not known; not known even by name, or by sight: and thus the case is not rare—that the chain of abject slavery is first detected when it has inextricably wound itself about the constitutional system. Thirdly, and lastly, was it [Yes, by passionate anticipation, I answer, before the question is finished]—was it on a sudden, overmastering impulse derived from bodily anguish? Loudly I repeat, Yes; loudly and indignantly—as in answer to a wilful calumny. Simply as an anodyne it was, under the mere coercion of pain the severest, that I first resorted to opium; and precisely the same torment it is, or some variety of that torment, which drives most people to make acquaintance with that same insidious remedy. Such was the fact; such by accident. Meantime, without blame it might have been otherwise. If in early days I had fully understood the

subtle powers lodged in this mighty drug (when judiciously regulated) (1), to tranquillise all irritations of the nervous system; (2), to stimulate the capacities of enjoyment; and (3) under any call for extraordinary exertion (such as all men meet at times), to sustain through twenty-four consecutive hours the else drooping animal energies—most certainly, knowing or suspecting all this, I should have inaugurated my opium career in the character of one seeking *extra* power and enjoyment, rather than of one shrinking from *extra* torment. And why not? If *that* argued any fault, is it not a fault that most of us commit every day with regard to alcohol? Are we entitled to use *that* only as a medicine? Is wine unlawful, except as an anodyne? I hope not: else I shall be obliged to counterfeit and to plead some anomalous *tic* in my little finger; and thus gradually, as in any Ovidian metamorphosis, I, that am at present a truth-loving man, shall change by daily inches into a dissembler. No: the whole race of men proclaim it lawful to drink wine without pleading a medical certificate as a qualification. That same license extends itself therefore to the use of opium; what a man may lawfully seek in wine, surely he may lawfully find in opium; and much more so in those many cases (of which mine happens to be one) where opium deranges the animal economy less by a great deal than an equivalent quantity of alcohol. Coleridge, therefore, was doubly in error when he allowed himself to aim most unfriendly blows at my supposed voluptuousness in the use of opium; in error as to a principle, and in error as to a fact. A letter of his, which I will hope that he did not design to have published, but which, however, *has* been published, points the attention of his correspondent to a broad distinction separating my case as an opium-eater from his own: he, it seems, had fallen excusably (because unavoidably) into this habit of eating opium—as the one sole therapeutic resource available against his particular malady; but I, wretch that I am, being so notoriously charmed by fairies against pain, must have resorted to opium in the abominable character of an adventurous voluptuary, angling in all streams for variety of pleasures. Coleridge is wrong to the whole extent of what was possible; wrong in his fact, wrong in his doctrine; in his little fact, and his big doctrine. I did not do the thing which he charges upon me; and if I *had* done it, this would not convict me as a citizen of Sybaris or Daphne. There never was a distinction more groundless

and visionary than that which it has pleased him to draw between my motives and his own; nor could Coleridge have possibly owed this mis-statement to any false information; since no man surely, on a question of my own private experience, could have pretended to be better informed than myself. Or, if there is really such a person, perhaps he will not think it too much trouble to re-write these Confessions from first to last, correcting their innumerable faults; and, as it happens that some parts of the unpublished sections for the present are missing, would he kindly restore them—brightening the colours that may have faded, rekindling the inspiration that may have drooped; filling up all those chasms, which else are likely to remain as permanent disfigurations of my little work? Meantime the reader, who takes any interest in such a question, will find that I myself (upon such a theme not simply the best, but surely the sole authority) have, without a shadow of variation, always given a different account of the matter. Most truly I have told the reader, that not any search after pleasure, but mere extremity of pain from rheumatic toothache—this and nothing else it was that first drove me into the use of opium. Coleridge's bodily affliction was simple rheumatism. Mine, which intermittingly raged for ten years, was rheumatism in the face combined with toothache. This I had inherited from my father; or inherited (I should rather say) from my own desperate ignorance; since a trifling dose of colocynth, or of any similar medicine, taken three times a-week, would more certainly than opium have delivered me from that terrible curse.* In this ignorance,

* "*That terrific curse*":—Two things blunt the general sense of horror, which would else connect itself with toothache—viz., first, its enormous diffusion; hardly a household in Europe being clear of it, each in turn having some one chamber intermittingly echoing the groans extorted by this cruel torture. There—viz., in its ubiquity—lies one cause of its slight valuation. A second cause is found in its immunity from danger. This latter ground of undervaluation is noticed in a saying ascribed (but on what authority I know not) to Sir Philip Sidney—viz., that supposing toothache liable in ever so small a proportion of its cases to a fatal issue, it would be generally ranked as the most dreadful amongst human maladies; whereas the certainty that it will in no extremity lead to death, and the knowledge that in the very midst of its storms sudden changes may be looked for, bringing long halcyon calms, have an unfair effect in lowering the appreciation of this malady considered as a trial of fortitude and patience. No stronger expression of its intensity and scorching fierceness can be imagined than this fact—that, within my private knowledge, two persons,

however, which misled me into making war upon toothache when ripened and manifesting itself in effects of pain, rather than upon its germs and gathering causes, I did but follow the rest of the world. To intercept the evil whilst yet in elementary stages of formation, was the true policy; whereas I in my blindness sought only for some mitigation to the evil when already formed, and past all reach of interception. In this stage of the suffering, formed and perfect, I was thrown passively upon chance advice, and therefore, by a natural consequence, upon opium—that being the one sole anodyne that is almost notoriously such, and which in that great function is universally appreciated.

Coleridge, therefore, and myself, as regards our baptismal initiation into the use of that mighty drug, occupy the very same position. We are embarked in the self-same boat; nor is it within the compass even of angelic hair-splitting, to show that the dark shadow thrown by our several trespasses in this field, mine and his, had by so much as a pin's point any assignable difference. Trespass against trespass (if any trespass there were)—shadow against shadow (if any shadow were really thrown by this trespass over the snowy disk of pure ascetic morality), in any case, that act in either of us would read into the same meaning, would count up as a debt into the same value, would measure as a delinquency into the same burden of responsibility. And vainly, indeed, does Coleridge attempt to differentiate two cases which ran into absolute identity, differing only as rheumatism differs from toothache. Amongst the admirers of Coleridge, I at all times stood in the foremost rank; and the more was my astonishment at being summoned so often to witness his carelessness in the management of controversial questions, and his demoniac inaccuracy in the statement of facts. The more also was my sense of Coleridge's wanton injustice in relation to myself individually. Coleridge's gross mis-statement of facts, in regard to our several opium experiences, had its origin, sometimes in flighty reading, sometimes in partial and incoherent reading, sometimes in subsequent forgetfulness; and any one of

who had suffered alike under toothache and cancer, have pronounced the former to be, on the scale of torture, by many degrees the worse. In both, there are *at times* what surgeons call "lancinating" pangs—keen, glancing, arrowy radiations of anguish; and upon these the basis of comparison was rested—paroxysm against paroxysm—with the result that I have stated.

these lax habits (it will occur to the reader) is a venial infirmity. Certainly it is; but surely *not* venial, when it is allowed to operate disadvantageously upon the character for self-control of a brother, who had never spoken of *him* but in the spirit of enthusiastic admiration; of that admiration which his exquisite works so amply challenge. Imagine the case that I really *had* done something wrong, still it would have been ungenerous—me it would have saddened, I confess, to see Coleridge rushing forward with a public denunciation of my fault:—"Know all men by these presents, that I, S. T. C., *a noticeable man with large grey eyes*,* am a licensed opium-eater, whereas this other man is a buccaneer, a pirate, a flibustier,† and can have none but a forged license in his disreputable pocket. In the name of Virtue, arrest him!" But the truth is, that inaccuracy as to facts and citations from books was in Coleridge a mere necessity of nature. Not three days ago, in reading a short comment of the late Archdeacon Hare ("Guesses at Truth") upon a bold speculation of Coleridge's (utterly baseless) with respect to the machinery of Etonian Latin verses, I found my old feelings upon this subject refreshed by an instance that is irresistibly comic, since everything, that Coleridge had relied upon as a citation from a book in support of his own hypothesis, turns out to be a pure fabrication of his own dreams; though, doubtless (which indeed it is that constitutes the characteristic interest of the case), without a suspicion on his part of his own furious romancing. The archdeacon's good-natured smile upon that Etonian case naturally reminded me of the case now before us, with regard to the history of our separate careers as opium-eaters. Upon which case I need say no more, as by this time the reader is aware that Coleridge's entire statement upon that subject is perfect moonshine, and, like the sculptured imagery of the pendulous lamp in "Christabel,"

"All carved from the carver's brain."

* See Wordsworth's exquisite picture of S. T. C. and himself as occasional denizens in the "Castle of Indolence."

† This word—in common use, and so spelled as I spell it, amongst the grand old French and English buccaneers contemporary with our own admirable Dampier, at the close of the seventeenth century—has recently been revived in the journals of the United States, with a view to the special case of Cuba, but (for what reason I know not) is now written always as *fillibusters*. Meantime, written in whatsoever way, it is understood to be a Franco-Spanish corruption of the English word *freebooter*.

This case, therefore, might now be counted on as disposed of ; and what sport it could yield might reasonably be thought exhausted. Meantime, on consideration, another and much deeper oversight of Coleridge's becomes apparent ; and as this connects itself with an aspect of the case that furnishes the foundation to the whole of these ensuing Confessions, it cannot altogether be neglected. Any attentive reader, after a few moments' reflection, will perceive that, whatever may have been the casual *occasion* of mine or Coleridge's opium-eating, this could not have been the permanent *ground* of opium-eating ; because neither rheumatism nor toothache is any *abiding* affection of the system. Both are intermitting maladies, and not at all capable of accounting for a *permanent* habit of opium-eating. Some months are requisite to found *that*. Making allowance for constitutional differences, I should say that *in less than 120 days* no habit of opium-eating could be formed strong enough to call for any extraordinary self-conquest in renouncing it, and even suddenly renouncing it. On Saturday you are an opium-eater, on Sunday no longer such. What then was it, after all, that made Coleridge a slave to opium, and a slave that could not break his chain ? He fancies, in his headlong carelessness, that he has accounted for this habit and this slavery ; and in the meantime he has accounted for nothing at all about which any question has arisen. Rheumatism, he says, drove him to opium. Very well ; but with proper medical treatment the rheumatism would soon have ceased ; or even, without medical treatment, under the ordinary oscillations of natural causes. And when the pain ceased, then the opium should have ceased. Why did it not ? Because Coleridge had come to taste the genial pleasure of opium ; and thus the very impeachment, which he fancied himself in some mysterious way to have evaded, recoils upon him in undiminished force. The rheumatic attack would have retired before the habit could have had time to form itself. Or suppose that I underrate the strength of the possible habit—this tells equally in *my* favour ; and Coleridge was not entitled to forget in *my* case a plea remembered in his own. It is really memorable in the annals of human self-deceptions, that Coleridge could have held such language in the face of such facts. I, boasting not at all of my self-conquests, and owning no moral argument against the free use of opium, nevertheless on mere *prudential* motives break through the vassalage more than once, and by

efforts which I have recorded as modes of transcendent suffering. Coleridge, professing to believe (without reason assigned) that opium-eating is criminal, and in some mysterious sense more criminal than wine-drinking or porter-drinking, having, therefore, the strongest *moral* motive for abstaining from it, yet suffers himself to fall into a captivity to this same wicked opium, deadlier than was ever heard of, and under no coercion whatever that he has anywhere explained to us. A slave he was to this potent drug not less abject than Caliban to Prospero—his detested and yet despotic master. Like Caliban, he frets his very heart-strings against the rivets of his chain. Still, at intervals, through the gloomy vigils of his prison, you hear muttered growls of impotent mutineering swelling upon the breeze :

“ *Irasque leonum
Vincla recusantum* ”——

recusantum, it is true, still refusing yet still accepting, protesting for ever against the fierce, overmastering curb-chain, yet for ever submitting to receive it into the mouth. It is notorious, that in Bristol (to *that* I can speak myself, but probably in many other places) he went so far as to hire men—porters, hackney-coachmen, and others—to oppose by force his entrance into any druggist's shop. But, as the authority for stopping him was derived simply from himself, naturally these poor men found themselves in a metaphysical fix, not provided for even by Thomas Aquinas or by the prince of Jesuitical casuists. And in this excruciating dilemma would occur such scenes as the following :—

“ Oh, sir,” would plead the suppliant porter—suppliant, yet semi-imperative (for equally if he *did*, and if he did *not*, show fight, the poor man's daily 5s. seemed endangered)—“ really you must not ; consider, sir, your wife and——”

Transcendental Philosopher. “ Wife ! what wife ? I have no wife.” *

Porter. But, really now, you must not, sir. Didn't you say no longer ago than yesterday——

Transcend. Philos. Pooh, pooh ! yesterday is a long time ago. Are you aware, my man, that people are known to have dropped down dead for timely want of opium ?

Porter. Ay, but you tell't me not to hearken——

Transcend. Philos. Oh, nonsense. An emergency, a shocking emergency, has arisen—quite unlooked for. No

* *Vide* “ Othello.”

matter what I told you in times long past. That, which I *now* tell you, is—that, if you don't remove that arm of yours from the doorway of this most respectable druggist, I shall have a good ground of action against you for assault and battery.

Am I the man to reproach Coleridge with this vassalage to opium? Heaven forbid! Having groaned myself under that yoke, I pity, and blame him not. But undeniably, such a vassalage must have been created wilfully and consciously by his own craving after genial stimulation; a thing which I do not blame, but Coleridge *did*. For my own part, duly as the torment relaxed in relief of which I had resorted to opium, I laid aside the opium, not under any meritorious effort of self-conquest; nothing of that sort do I pretend to; but simply on a prudential instinct warning me not to trifle with an engine so awful of consolation and support, nor to waste upon a momentary uneasiness what might eventually prove, in the midst of all-shattering hurricanes, the great elixir of resurrection. What was it that did in reality make me an opium-eater? That affection which finally drove me into the *habitual* use of opium, what was it? Pain was it? No, but misery. Casual overcasting of sunshine, was it? No, but blank desolation. Gloom was it that might have departed? No, but settled and abiding darkness—

“Total eclipse,
Without all hope of day!” *

Yet whence derived? Caused by what? Caused, as I might truly plead, by youthful distresses in London; were it not that these distresses were due, in their ultimate origin, to my own unpardonable folly; and to that folly I trace many ruins. Oh, spirit of merciful interpretation, angel of forgiveness to youth and its aberrations, that hearkenest for ever as if to some sweet choir of far-off female intercessions! will ye, choir that intercede—wilt thou, angel that forgivest—join together, and charm away that mighty phantom, born amidst the gathering mists of remorse, which strides after me in pursuit from forgotten days—towering for ever into proportions more and more colossal, overhanging and overshadowing my head as if close behind, yet dating its nativity from hours that are fled by more than half-a-century? Oh heavens! that it

* “Samson Agonistes.”

should be possible for a child not seventeen years old, by a momentary blindness, by listening to a false, false whisper from his own bewildered heart, by one erring step, by a motion this way or that, to change the currents of his destiny, to poison the fountains of his peace, and in the twinkling of an eye to lay the foundations of a life-long repentance ! Yet, alas ! I must abide by the realities of the case. And one thing is clear, that amidst such bitter self-reproaches as are now extorted from me by the anguish of my recollections, it cannot be with any purpose of weaving plausible excuses or of evading blame, that I trace the origin of my confirmed opium-eating to a necessity growing out of my early sufferings in the streets of London. Because, though true it is that the re-agency of these London sufferings did in after years *enforce* the use of opium, equally it is true that the sufferings themselves grew out of my own folly. What really calls for excuse, is not the recourse to opium, when opium had become the one sole remedy available for the malady, but those follies which had themselves produced that malady.

I, for my part, after I had become a regular opium-eater, and from mismanagement had fallen into miserable excesses in the use of opium, did nevertheless, four several times, contend successfully against the dominion of this drug ; did four several times renounce it ; renounced it for long intervals ; and finally resumed it upon the warrant of my enlightened and deliberate judgment, as being of two evils by very much the least. In this I acknowledge nothing that calls for excuse. I repeat again and again, that not the application of opium, with its deep tranquillising powers to the mitigation of evils, bequeathed by my London hardships, is what reasonably calls for sorrow, but that extravagance of childish folly which precipitated me into scenes naturally producing such hardships.

These scenes I am now called upon to retrace. Possibly they are sufficiently interesting to merit, even on their own account, some short record ; but at present, and at this point, they have become indispensable as a key to the proper understanding of all which follows. For in these incidents of my early life is found the entire substratum, together with the secret and underlying motive * of those pompous dreams and dream-sceneries which were in reality

* "*Motive*" :—The word *motive* is here used in the sense attached by artists and connoisseurs to the technical word *motivo*, applied to pictures, or to the separate movements in a musical theme.

the true objects—first and last—contemplated in these Confessions.

My father died when I was in my seventh year, leaving six children, including myself (viz., four sons and two daughters), to the care of four guardians and of our mother, who was invested with the legal authority of a guardian. This word "*guardian*" kindles a fiery thrilling in my nerves ; so much was that special power of guardianship, as wielded by one of the four, concerned in the sole capital error of my boyhood. To this error my own folly would hardly have been equal, unless by concurrence with the obstinacy of others. From the bitter remembrance of this error in myself—of this obstinacy in my hostile guardian, suffer me to draw the privilege of making a moment's pause upon this subject of legal guardianship.

There is not (I believe) in human society, under whatever form of civilisation, any trust or delegated duty which has more often been negligently or even perfidiously administered. In the days of classical Greece and Rome, my own private impression, founded on the collation of many incidental notices, is—that this, beyond all other forms of domestic authority, furnished to wholesale rapine and speculation their very amplest arena. The relation of father and son, as was that of *patron* and *client*, were generally, in the practice of life, cherished with religious fidelity : whereas the solemn duties of the *tutor* (i.e., the *guardian*) to his ward, which had their very root and origin in the tenderest adjurations of a dying friend, though subsequently refreshed by the hourly spectacle of helpless orphanage playing round the margins of pitfalls hidden by flowers, spoke but seldom to the sensibilities of a Roman through any language of oracular power. Few indeed, if any, were the obligations, in a proper sense *moral*, which pressed upon the Roman. The main fountains of moral obligation had in Rome, by law or by custom, been thoroughly poisoned. Marriage had corrupted itself through the facility of divorce, and through the consequences of that facility (viz., levity in choosing, and fickleness in adhering to the choice), into so exquisite a traffic of selfishness, that it could not yield so much as a phantom model of sanctity. The relation of husband and wife had, for all moral impressions, perished amongst the Romans. The relation of father and child had all its capacities of holy tenderness crushed out of it under the fierce pressure of penal and vindictive enforcements.

The duties of the client to his patron stood upon no basis of simple gratitude or simple fidelity (corresponding to the feudal *fealty*), but upon a basis of prudential terror; terror from positive law, or from social opinion. From the first intermeddling of law with the movement of the higher moral affections, there is an end to freedom in the act—to purity in the motive—to dignity in the personal relation. Accordingly, in the France of the pre-revolutionary period, and in the China of all periods, it has been with baleful effects to the national morals that positive law has come in aid of the paternal rights. And in the Rome of ancient history it may be said that this one original and rudimental wrong done to the holy freedom of human affections, had the effect of extinguishing thenceforward all *conscientious* movement in whatever direction. And thus, amongst a people naturally more highly principled than the Greeks, if you except ebullition of public spirit and patriotism (too often of mere ignoble nationality), no class of actions stood upon any higher basis of motive than (1) legal ordinance; (2) superstitious fear; or (3) servile compliance with the insolent exactions of popular usage. Strange, therefore, it would have been if the *tutor* of obscure orphans, with *extra* temptations and *extra* facilities for indulging them, should have shown himself more faithful to his trust than the governor of provinces—*prætorian* or *proconsular*. Yet who more treacherous and rapacious than he? Rarest of men was the upright governor that accepted no bribes from the criminal, and extorted no ransoms from the timid. He nevertheless, as a *public* trustee, was watched by the jealousy of political competitors, and had by possibility a solemn audit, to face in the senate or in the forum; perhaps in both. But the tutor, who administered a private trust on behalf of orphans, might count on the certainty that no public attention could ever be attracted to concerns so obscure, and politically so uninteresting. Reasonably, therefore, and by all analogy, a Roman must have regarded the ordinary domestic *tutor* as almost inevitably a secret delinquent using the opportunities and privileges of his office as mere instruments for working spoliation and ruin upon the inheritance confided to his care. This deadly and besetting evil of Pagan days must have deepened a hundredfold the glooms overhanging the death-beds of parents. Too often the dying father could not fail to read in his own life-long experience, that, whilst seeking special

protection for his children, he might himself be introducing amongst them a separate and imminent danger. Leaving behind him a little household of infants, a little fleet (as it might be represented) of fairy pinnaces, just raising their anchors in preparation for crossing the mighty deeps of life, he made signals for "convoy." Some one or two (at best imperfectly known to him), amongst those who traversed the same seas, he accepted in that character; but doubtfully, sorrowfully, fearfully; and at the very moment when the faces of his children were disappearing amongst the vapours of death, the miserable thought would cross his prophetic soul—that too probably this pretended "convoy," under the strong temptations of the case, might eventually become pirates; robbers, at the least; and by possibility wilful misleaders to the inexperience of his children.

From this dreadful aggravation of the anguish at any rate besetting the death-beds of parents summoned away from a group of infant children, there has been a mighty deliverance wrought in a course of centuries by the vast diffusion of Christianity.* In these days, wheresoever an atmosphere is breathed that has been purified by Christian charities and Christian principles—this household pestilence has been continually dwindling: and in the England of this generation there is no class of peculation which we so seldom hear of; one proof of which is found in the indifference with which most of us regard the absolute security offered to children by the Court of Chancery. My father, therefore, as regarded the quiet of his dying hours, benefited by the felicity of his times and his country. He made the best selection for the future guardianship of his six children that his opportunities allowed; from his circle of intimate friends, he selected the four who stood highest in his estimation for honour and practical wisdom: which done, and relying for the redressing of any harsh tendencies in male guardians upon the discretionary power lodged in my mother, thenceforth he rested from his anxieties. Not one of these guardians but justified his choice so far as honour and integrity were concerned. Yet, after all, there is a limit (and sooner reached perhaps in England than in other divisions of Christendom) to the good that can be achieved in such cases by prospective wisdom. For we, in England, more absolutely than can be asserted of

* See Note A at the end of the volume.

any other nation, are not *fainéans*: rich and poor, all of us have something to do. To Italy it is that we must look for a peasantry idle through two-thirds of their time. To Spain it is that we must look for an aristocracy *physically* * degraded under the ignoble training of women and priests; and for princes (such as Ferdinand VII.) that make it the glory of their lives to have embroidered a petticoat. Amongst ourselves of this current generation, whilst those functions of guardianship may be surely counted on which presume conscientious loyalty to the interests of their wards; on the other hand, all which presume continued vigilance and provision from afar are, in simple truth, hardly compatible with our English state of society. The guardians chosen by my father, had they been the wisest and also the most energetic of men, could not in many conceivable emergencies have fulfilled his secret wishes. Of the four men, one was a merchant (not in the narrow sense of Scotland, derived originally from France, where no class of merchant princes has ever existed, but in the large noble sense of England—of Florence—of Venice): consequently, his extensive relations with sea-ports and distant colonies continually drawing off his attention, and even his personal presence, from domestic affairs, made it hopeless that he should even attempt more on behalf of his wards than slightly to watch the administration of their pecuniary interests. A second of our guardians was a rural magistrate, but in a populous district close upon Manchester, which even at that time was belted with a growing body of turbulent aliens—Welsh and Irish. He therefore, overwhelmed by the distractions of his official station, rightly perhaps conceived himself to have fulfilled his engagements as a guardian, if he stood ready to come forward upon any difficulty arising, but else in ordinary cases devolved his functions upon those who enjoyed more leisure. In that category stood, beyond a doubt, a third of our guardians, the Rev. Samuel H., who was at the time of my father's death a curate at some church (I believe)

* It is asserted by travellers—English, French, and German alike—that the ducal order in Spain (as that order of the Spanish peerage most carefully withdrawn from what Kentucky would call the *rough-and-tumble* discipline of a popular education) exhibit in their very persons and bodily development undisguised evidences of effeminate habits operating through many generations. It would be satisfactory to know the unexaggerated truth on this point; the truth unbiassed alike by national and by democratic prejudices.

in Manchester or in Salford.* This gentleman represented a class—large enough at all times by necessity of human nature, but in those days far larger than at present—that class, I mean, who sympathise with no spiritual sense or spiritual capacities in man; who understand by religion simply a respectable code of ethics—leaning for support upon some great mysteries dimly traced in the background, and commemorated in certain great church festivals by the *elder* churches of Christendom; as, *e.g.*, by the English, which does not stand as to age on the Reformation epoch, by the Romish, and by the Greek. He had composed a body of about 330 sermons, which thus, at the rate of two every Sunday, revolved through a cycle of three years; that period being modestly assumed as sufficient for insuring to their eloquence total oblivion. Possibly to a cynic, some shorter cycle might have seemed equal to that effect, since their topics rose but rarely above the level of prudential ethics; and the style, though scholarly, was not impressive. As a preacher, Mr. H. was sincere, but not earnest. He was a good and conscientious man; and he made a high valuation of the pulpit as an organ of civilisation for co-operating with books; but it was impossible for any man, starting from the low ground of themes so unimpassioned and so desultory as the benefits of industry, the danger from bad companions, the importance of setting a good example, or the value of perseverance—to pump up any persistent stream of earnestness either in himself or in his auditors. These auditors, again, were not of a class to desire much earnestness. There were no naughty people among them: most of them were rich, and came to church in carriages: and, as a natural result of their esteem for my reverend guardian, a number of them combined to build a church for him—viz., St. Peter's, at the point of confluence between Mosely Street and the newly projected Oxford Street—then existing only as a sketch in the portfolio of a surveyor. But what con-

* Salford is a large town legally distinguished from Manchester for parliamentary purposes, and divided from it physically by a river, but else virtually, as regards intercourse and reciprocal influence, is a quarter of Manchester; in fact, holding the same relation to Manchester that Southwark does to London; or, if the reader insists upon having a classical illustration of the case, the same relation that in ancient days Argos did to Mycenæ. An invitation to dinner, given by the public herald of Argos, could be heard to the centre of Mycenæ; and by a gourmand, if the dinner promised to be specially good, in the remoter suburb.

nected myself individually with Mr. H. was, that two or three years previously I, together with one of my brothers (five years my senior), had been placed under his care for classical instruction. This was done, I believe, in obedience to a dying injunction of my father, who had a just esteem for Mr. S. H. as an upright man, but apparently too exalted an opinion of his scholarship: for he was but an indifferent Grecian. In whatever way the appointment arose, so it was that this gentleman, previously *tutor* in the Roman sense to all of us, now became to my brother and myself tutor also in the common English sense. From the age of eight, up to eleven-and-a-half, the character and intellectual attainments of Mr. H. were therefore influentially important to myself in the development of my powers, such as they were. Even his 330 sermons, which rolled overhead with such slender effect upon his general congregation, to me became a real instrument of improvement. One-half of these, indeed, were all that I heard; for, as my father's house (Greenhay) stood at this time in the country, Manchester not having yet overtaken it, the distance obliged us to go in a carriage, and only to the morning service; but every sermon in this morning course was propounded to me as a textual basis upon which I was to raise a mimic duplicate—sometimes a pure miniature abstract—sometimes a rhetorical expansion—but preserving as much as possible of the original language; and also (which puzzled me painfully) preserving the exact succession of the thoughts; which might be easy where they stood in some dependency upon each other, as, for instance, in the development of an argument, but in arbitrary or chance arrangements was often as trying to my powers as any feat of rope-dancing. I, therefore, amongst that whole congregation,* was the one sole careworn auditor—agitated

* “*That whole congregation*”:—Originally at churches which I do not remember, where, however, in consideration of my tender age, the demands levied upon my memory were much lighter. Two or three years later, when I must have been nearing my tenth year, and when St. Peter's had been finished, occurred the opening, and consequently (as an indispensable pre-condition) the consecration of that edifice by the bishop of the diocese (*viz.*, Chester). I, as a ward of the incumbent, was naturally amongst those specially invited to the festival; and I remember a little incident, which exposed broadly the conflict of feelings inherited by the Church of England from the Puritans of the seventeenth century. The architecture of the church was Grecian; and certainly the enrichments, inside or outside, were few enough, neither florid nor obtrusive. But in the centre of the ceiling, for the sake of breaking

about that which, over all other heads, flowed away like water over marble slabs—viz., the somewhat torpid sermon of my somewhat torpid guardian. But this annoyance was not wholly lost: and those same $\frac{330}{2}$ sermons, which (lasting only through sixteen minutes each) were approved and forgotten by everybody else, for me became a perfect palæstra of intellectual gymnastics far better suited to my childish weakness than could have been the sermons of Isaac Barrow or Jeremy Taylor. In these last, the gorgeous imagery would have dazzled my feeble vision, and in both the gigantic thinking would have crushed my efforts at apprehension. I drew, in fact, the deepest benefits from this weekly exercise. Perhaps, also, in the end it ripened into a great advantage for me, though long and bitterly I complained of it, that I was not allowed to use a pencil in taking notes; all was to be charged upon the memory. But it is notorious that the memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it, and becomes trustworthy, as you trust it. So that, in my third year of practice, I found my abstracting and condensing powers sensibly enlarged. My guardian was gradually better satisfied: for unfortunately (and in the beginning it *was* unfortunate) always one witness could be summoned against me upon any impeachment of my fidelity—viz., the sermon itself; since, though lurking amongst the 330, the wretch was easily forked out. But these appeals grew fewer; and my guardian, as I have said, was continually better satisfied. Meantime, might not I be continually less satisfied with *him* and his 330 sermons? Not at all: loving and trusting, without doubt or reserve, and with the deepest principles of veneration rooted in my nature, I never, upon meeting something more impressive than the average complexion of my guardian's discourses, for one moment thought of him

the monotony of so large a blank white surface, there was moulded, in plaster-of-Paris, a large tablet or shield, charged with a cornucopia of fruits and flowers. And yet, when we were all assembled in the vestry waiting—rector, churchwardens, architect, and trains of dependants—there arose a deep buzz of anxiety, which soon ripened into an articulate expression of fear, that the bishop would think himself bound, like the horrid eikonoclasts of 1645, to issue his decree of utter *averruncation* to the simple decoration overhead. Fearfully did we all tread the little aisles in the procession of the prelate. Earnestly my lord looked upwards; but finally—were it courtesy, or doubtfulness as to his ground, or approbation—he passed on.

as worse or feebler than others, but simply as different ; and no more quarrelled with him for his characteristic languor, than with a green riband for not being blue. By mere accident, I one day heard quoted a couplet which seemed to me sublime. It described a preacher such as sometimes arises in difficult times, or in fermenting times, a son of thunder, that looks all enemies in the face, and volunteers a defiance even when it would have been easy to evade it. The lines were written by Richard Baxter—who battled often with self-created storms from the first dawn of the Parliamentary War in 1642, through the period of Cromwell (to whom he was personally odious), and, finally, through the trying reigns of the second Charles and of the second James. As a pulpit orator, he was perhaps the Whitfield of the seventeenth century—the *Leuconomos* of Cowper. And thus it is that he describes the impassioned character of his own preaching—

“ I preach’d, as never sure to preach again ;

[Even *that* was telling ; but then followed this thunder-peal]

And as a dying man to dying men.”

This couplet, which seemed to me equally for weight and for splendour like molten gold, laid bare another aspect of the Catholic church ; revealed it as a Church militant and crusading.

Not even thus, however, did I descry any positive imperfection in my guardian. He and Baxter had fallen upon different generations. Baxter’s century, from first to last, was revolutionary. Along the entire course of that seventeenth century, the great principles of representative government and the rights of conscience * were passing through the anguish of conflict and fiery trial. Now again in my own day, at the close of the eighteenth century, it is true that all the elements of social life were thrown into the crucible—but on behalf of our neighbours, no longer of ourselves. No longer, therefore, was invoked the heroic

* “ *The rights of conscience* ” :—With which it is painful to know that Baxter did not sympathise. Religious toleration he called “ Soul-murder.” And if you reminded him that the want of this toleration had been his own capital grievance, he replied, “ Ah, but the cases were very different : I was in the right ; whereas the vast majority of those who will benefit by this newfangled toleration are shockingly in the wrong.”

pleader, ready for martyrdom, preaching, therefore, "as never sure to preach again"; and I no more made it a defect in my guardian that he wanted energies for combating evils now forgotten, than that he had not in patriotic fervour leaped into a gulf, like the fabulous Roman martyr Curtius, or in zeal for liberty had not mounted a scaffold, like the real English martyr Algernon Sidney. Every Sunday, duly as it revolved, brought with it this cruel anxiety. On Saturday night under sad anticipation, on Sunday night under sadder experimental knowledge, of my trying task, I slept ill: my pillow was stuffed with thorns; and until Monday morning's inspection and *armilustrium* had dismissed me from parade to "stand at ease," verily I felt like a false steward summoned to some killing audit. Then suppose Monday to be invaded by some horrible intruder, visitor perhaps from a band of my guardian's poor relations, that in some undiscovered nook of Lancashire seemed in fancy to blacken all the fields, and suddenly at a single note of "*caw, caw,*" rose in one vast cloud like crows, and settled down for weeks at the table of my guardian and his wife, whose noble hospitality would never allow the humblest among them to be saddened by a faint welcome. In such cases, very possibly the whole week did not see the end of my troubles.

On these terms, for upwards of three-and-a-half years—that is, from my eighth to beyond my eleventh birth-day—my guardian and I went on cordially: he never once angry, as indeed he never had any reason for anger; I never once treating my task either as odious (which in the most abominable excess it was), or, on the other hand, as costing but a trivial effort, which practice might have taught me to hurry through with contemptuous ease. To the very last I found no ease at all in this weekly task, which never ceased to be a "thorn in the flesh": and I believe that my guardian, like many of the grim Pagan divinities, inhaled a flavour of fragrant incense, from the fretting and stinging of anxiety which, as it were some holy vestal fire, he kept alive by this periodic exaction. "It gave him pleasure that he could reach me in the very recesses of my dreams, where even a Pariah might look for rest; so that the Sunday, which to man, and even to the brutes within his gates, offered an interval of rest, for me was signalled as a day of martyrdom. Yet in this, after all, it is possible that he did me a service: for my constitutional infirmity of mind ran but too determinately towards the sleep of

endless reverie, and of dreamy abstraction from life and its realities.

Whether serviceable or not, however, the connection between my guardian and myself was now drawing to its close. Some months after my eleventh birth-day, Greenhay* was sold, and my mother's establishment—both children and servants—was translated to Bath: only that for a few months I and one brother were still left under the care of Mr. Samuel H.; so far, that is, as regarded our education. Else, as regarded the luxurious comforts of a thoroughly English home, we became the guests, by special invitation, of a young married couple in Manchester—viz., Mr. and Mrs. K—I. This incident, though otherwise without results, I look back upon with feelings inexpressibly profound, as a jewelly parenthesis of pathetic happiness—such as emerges but once in any man's life. Mr. K. was a young and rising American merchant; by which I mean, that he was an Englishman who exported to the United States. He had married about three years previously a pretty and amiable young woman—well-educated, and endowed with singular compass of intellect. But the distinguishing feature in this household was the spirit of love which, under the benign superintendence of the mistress, diffused itself through all its members.

The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, amongst many novel ideas, which found no welcome even with his friends, insisted earnestly and often upon this—viz., that a great danger was threatening our social system in Great Britain, from the austere separation existing between our educated and our working classes; and that a more conciliatory style of intercourse between these two bisections of our social body must be established, or else—a tremendous revolution. This is not the place to discuss so large a question; and I shall content myself with making two remarks. The first is this—that, although a change of the sort contemplated by Dr. Arnold might, if considered as an operative *cause*, point forward to some advantages, on the other hand, if considered as an *effect*, it points backward to a less noble constitution of society by much than we already enjoy. Those nations whose upper classes speak paternally

* "*Greenhay*":—A country-house built by my father; and at the time of its foundation (say in 1791 or 1792) separated from the last outskirts of Manchester by an entire mile; but now, and for many a year, overtaken by the hasty strides of this great city, and long since (I presume) absorbed into its mighty uproar.

and caressingly to the working classes, and to servants in particular, do so because they speak from the lofty stations of persons having civil rights to those who have none. Two centuries back, when a military chieftain addressed his soldiers as "*my children*," he did so because he was an irresponsible despot exercising uncontrolled powers of life and death. From the moment when legal rights have been won for the poorest classes, inevitable respect on the part of the higher classes extinguishes for ever the affectionate style which belongs naturally to the state of pupilage or infantine bondage.

That is my first remark: my second is this—that the change advocated by Dr. Arnold, whether promising or not, is practically impossible; or possible, I should say, through one sole channel—viz., that of domestic servitude. There only do the two classes concerned come hourly into contact. On that stage only they meet without intrusion upon each other. There only is an opening for change. And a wise mistress, who possesses tact enough to combine a gracious affability with a self-respect that never slumbers nor permits her to descend into gossip, will secure the attachment of all young and impressible women. Such a mistress was Mrs. K——. She had won the gratitude of her servants from the first, by making the amplest provision for their comfort; their confidence, by listening with patience, and counselling with prudence; and their respect, by refusing to intermeddle with gossiping personalities always tending to slander. To this extent, perhaps, most mistresses might follow her example. But the happiness which reigned in Mrs. K——'s house at this time depended very much upon special causes. All the eight persons had the advantage of youth; and the three young female servants were under the spell of fascination, such as could rarely be counted on, from a spectacle held up hourly before their eyes, that spectacle which of all others is the most touching to womanly sensibilities, and which any one of these servants might hope, without presumption, to realise for herself—the spectacle, I mean, of a happy marriage union between two persons, who lived in harmony so absolute with each other, as to be independent of the world outside. How tender and self-sufficing such a union might be, they saw with their own eyes. The season was then mid-winter, which of itself draws closer all household ties. Their own labours, as generally in respectable English services, were finished for the most part by two o'clock; and as the hours

of evening drew nearer, when the master's return might be looked for without fail, beautiful was the smile of anticipation upon the gentle features of the mistress: even more beautiful the reflex of that smile, half-unconscious, and half-repressed, upon the features of the sympathising hand-maidens. One child, a little girl of two years old, had then crowned the happiness of the K——s. She naturally lent her person at all times, and apparently in all places at once, to the improvement of the family groups. My brother and myself, who had been trained from infancy to the courteous treatment of servants, filled up a vacancy in the graduated scale of ascending ages, and felt in varying degrees the depths of a peace which we could not adequately understand or appreciate. Bad tempers there were none amongst us; nor any opening for personal jealousies; nor, through the privilege of our common youth, either angry recollections breathing from the past, or fretting anxieties gathering from the future. The spirit of hope and the spirit of peace (so it seemed to me, when looking back upon this profound calm) had, for their own enjoyment, united in a sisterly league to blow a solitary bubble of visionary happiness—and to sequester from the unresting hurricanes of life one solitary household of eight persons within a four months' lull, as if within some Arabian tent on some untrodden wilderness, withdrawn from human intrusion, or even from knowledge, by worlds of mist and vapour.

How deep was that lull! and yet, as in a human atmosphere, how frail! Did the visionary bubble burst at once? Not so: but silently and by measured steps, like a dissolving palace of snow, it collapsed. In the superb expression of Shakspeare, minted by himself, and drawn from his own aerial fancy, like a cloud it "*dislimned*"; lost its lineaments by stealthy steps. Already the word "*parting*" (for myself and my brother were under summons for Bath) hoisted the first signal for breaking up. Next, and not very long afterwards, came a mixed signal: alternate words of joy and grief—marriage and death severed the sisterly union amongst the young female servants. Then, thirdly, but many years later, vanished from earth, and from peace the deepest that can support itself on earth, summoned to a far deeper peace, the mistress of the household herself, together with her first-born child. Some years later, perhaps twenty from this time, as I stood sheltering myself from rain in a shop within the most public street of

Manchester, the master of the establishment drew my attention to a gentleman on the opposite side of the street—roaming along in a reckless style of movement, and apparently insensible to the notice which he attracted. “That,” said the master of the shop, “was once a leading merchant in our town; but he met with great commercial embarrassments. There was no impeachment of his integrity, or (as I believe) of his discretion. But what with these commercial calamities, and deaths in his family, he lost all hope; and you see what sort of consolation it is that he seeks”—meaning to say that his style of walking argued intoxication. I did not think so. There was a settled misery in his eye, but complicated with *that* an expression of nervous distraction, that, if it should increase, would make life an intolerable burden. I never saw him again, and thought with horror of his being called in old age to face the fierce tragedies of life. For many reasons, I recoiled from forcing myself upon his notice: but I had ascertained, some time previously to this casual rencontre, that he and myself were, at that date, all that remained of the once joyous household. At present, and for many a year, I am myself the sole relic from that household sanctuary—sweet, solemn, profound—that concealed, as in some ark floating on solitary seas, eight persons, since called away, all except myself, one after one, to that rest which only could be deeper than ours was then.

When I left the K——s, I left Manchester; and during the next three years I was sent to two very different schools; first, to a public one—viz., the Bath Grammar School, then and since famous for its excellence—secondly, to a private school in Wiltshire. At the end of the three years, I found myself once again in Manchester. I was then fifteen years old, and a trifle more; and as it had come to the knowledge of Mr. G., a banker in Lincolnshire (whom hitherto I have omitted to notice amongst my guardians, as the one too generally prevented from interfering by his remoteness from the spot, but whom otherwise I should have recorded with honour, as by much the ablest amongst them), that some pecuniary advantages were attached to a residence at the Manchester Grammar School, whilst in other respects that school seemed as eligible as any other, he had counselled my mother to send me thither. In fact, a three years’ residence at this school obtained an annual allowance for seven years of nearly (if not quite) £50; which sum, added to my own patri-

monial income of £150, would have made up the annual £200 ordinarily considered the proper allowance for an Oxford under-graduate. No objection arising from any quarter, this plan was adopted, and soon afterwards carried into effect.

On a day, therefore, it was in the closing autumn (or rather in the opening winter) of 1800 that my first introduction took place to the Manchester Grammar School. The school-room showed already in its ample proportions some hint of its pretensions as an endowed school, or school of that class which I believe peculiar to England. To this limited extent had the architectural sense of power been timidly and parsimoniously invoked. Beyond that, nothing had been attempted; and the dreary expanse of whitewashed walls, that at so small a cost might have been embellished by plaster-of-Paris friezes and large medallions, illustrating to the eye of the youthful student the most memorable glorifications of literature—these were bare as the walls of a poor-house or lazaretto; buildings whose functions, as thoroughly sad and gloomy, the mind recoils from drawing into relief by sculpture or painting. But this building was dedicated to purposes that were noble. The naked walls clamoured for decoration: and how easily might tablets have been moulded—exhibiting (as a first homage to literature) Athens, with the wisdom of Athens, in the person of Pisistratus, concentrating the general energies upon the revisal and the re-casting of the “Iliad.” Or (second) the Athenian captives in Sicily, within the fifth century B.C., as winning noble mercy for themselves by some

“Repeated air
Of sad Electra’s poet.”

Such, and so sudden, had been the oblivion of earthly passions wrought by the contemporary poet of Athens, that in a moment the wrath of Sicily, with all its billows, ran down into a heavenly calm; and he that could plead for his redemption no closer relation to Euripides than the accident of recalling some scatterings from his divine verses, suddenly found his chains dropping to the ground; and himself, that in the morning had risen a despairing slave in a stone-quarry, translated at once as a favoured brother into the palace of Syracuse. Or, again, how easy to represent (third) “the great Emathian conqueror,” that in the very opening of his career, whilst visiting Thebes

with vengeance, nevertheless relented at the thought of literature, and

“Bade spare

The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground.”

Alexander might have been represented amongst the colonnades of some Persian capital—Ecbatana or Babylon, Susa or Persepolis—in the act of receiving from Greece, as a *nuzzur* more awful than anything within the gift of the “barbaric East,” a jewelled casket containing the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey”; creations that already have lived almost as long as the Pyramids.

Puritanically bald and odious therefore, in my eyes, was the hall up which my guardian and myself paced solemnly—though not Miltonically “riding up to the Soldan’s chair,” yet in fact, within a more limited kingdom, advancing to the chair of a more absolute despot. This potentate was the head-master, or *archididasculus*, of the Manchester Grammar School; and that school was variously distinguished. It was (1) ancient, having in fact been founded by a bishop of Exeter in an early part of the sixteenth century, so as to be now, in 1856, more than 330 years old; (2) it was rich, and was annually growing richer; and (3) it was dignified by a beneficial relation to the magnificent University of Oxford.

The head-master at that time was Mr. Charles Lawson. In former editions of this work, I created him a doctor; my object being to evade too close an approach to the realities of the case, and consequently to personalities, which (though indifferent to myself) would have been in some cases displeasing to others. A doctor, however, Mr. Lawson was not; nor in the account of law a clergyman. Yet most people, governed unconsciously by the associations surrounding their composite idea of a dignified school-master, invested him with the clerical character. And in reality he *had* taken deacon’s orders in the Church of England. But not the less he held himself to be a layman, and was addressed as such by all his correspondents of rank, who might be supposed best to understand the technical rules of English etiquette. Etiquette in such cases cannot entirely detach itself from law. Now, in English law, as was shown in Horne Tooke’s case, the rule is, *Once a clergyman, and always a clergyman*. The sacred character with which ordination clothes a man is indelible. But, on the other hand, who is a clergyman? Not he that

has taken simply the initial orders of a deacon, so at least I have heard, but he that has taken the second and full orders of a priest. If otherwise, then there was a great mistake current amongst Mr. Lawson's friends in addressing him as an esquire.

Squire or not squire, however, parson or not a parson—whether sacred or profane—Mr. Lawson was in some degree interesting by his position and his recluse habits. Life was over with him, for its hopes and for its trials. Or at most one trial yet awaited him, which was—to fight with a painful malady, and fighting to die. He still had his dying to do: he was in arrear as to *that*: else all was finished. It struck me (but, with such limited means for judging, I might easily be wrong) that his understanding was of a narrow order. But that did not disturb the interest which surrounded him now in his old age (probably seventy-five, or more), nor make any drawback from the desire I had to spell backwards and re-compose the text of his life. What had been his fortunes in this world? Had they travelled upwards or downwards? What triumphs had he enjoyed in the sweet and solemn cloisters of Oxford? What mortifications in the harsh world outside? Two only had survived in the malicious traditions of "his friends." He was a Jacobite (as were so many amongst my dear Lancastrian compatriots); had drunk the Pretender's health, and had drunk it in company with that Dr. Byrom who had graced the *symposium* by the famous equivocating *impromptu* * to the health of that prince. Mr. Lawson had therefore been obliged to witness the final prostration of his political party. That was his earliest

* "*Equivocating impromptu*":—The party had gathered in a tumultuary way; so that some Capulets had mingled with the Montagues, one of whom called upon Dr. Byrom to drink *The King, God bless him! and Confusion to the Pretender!* Upon which the doctor sang out—

"God bless the king, of church and state defender;
God bless (no harm in *blessing*) the Pretender!
But who Pretender is, and who the King—
God bless us all! that's quite another thing."

Dr. Byrom was otherwise famous than as a Jacobite—viz., as the author of a very elaborate shorthand, which (according to some who have examined it) rises even to a philosophic dignity. David Hartley in particular said of it, "That, if ever a philosophic language (as projected by Bishop Wilkins, by Leibnitz, etc.) should be brought to bear, in that case Dr. Byrom's work would furnish the proper character for its notation."

mortification. His second, about seven years later, was, that he had been jilted ; and with circumstances (at least so I heard) of cruel scorn. Was it that *he* had interpreted in a sense too flattering for himself ambiguous expressions of favour in the lady ? or that she in cruel caprice had disowned the hopes which she had authorised ? However this might be, half-a-century of soothing and reconciling years had cicatrised the wounds of Mr. Lawson's heart. The lady of 1752, if living in 1800, must be furiously wrinkled. And a strange metaphysical question arises : Whether, when the object of an impassioned love has herself faded into a shadow, the fiery passion itself can still survive as an abstraction, still mourn over its wrongs, still clamour for redress. I have heard of such cases. In Wordsworth's poem of " Ruth " (which was founded, as I happen to know, upon facts), it is recorded as an affecting incident, that, some months after the first frenzy of her disturbed mind had given way to medical treatment, and had lapsed into a gentler form of lunacy, she was dismissed from confinement ; and upon finding herself uncontrolled among the pastoral scenes where she played away her childhood, she gradually fell back to the original habits of her life whilst yet undisturbed by sorrow. Something similar had happened to Mr. Lawson ; and some time after his first shock, amongst other means for effacing that deep-grooved impression, he had laboured to replace himself, as much as was possible, in the situation of a college student. In this effort he was assisted considerably by the singular arrangement of the house attached to his official station. For an English house it was altogether an oddity, being, in fact, built upon a Roman plan. All the rooms on both storeys had their windows looking down upon a little central court. This court was quadrangular, but so limited in its dimensions, that by a Roman it would have been regarded as the *impluvium* : for Mr. Lawson, however, with a little exertion of fancy, it transmuted itself into a college quadrangle. Here, therefore, were held the daily " callings-over," at which every student was obliged to answer, upon being named. And thus the unhappy man, renewing continually the fancy that he was still standing in an Oxford quadrangle, perhaps cheated himself into the belief that all had been a dream which concerned the caprices of the lady, and the lady herself a phantom. College usages also, which served to strengthen this fanciful *alibi*—such, for instance, as the having two plates arranged before him at

dinner (one for the animal, the other for the vegetable, food)—were reproduced at Millgate. One sole luxury also, somewhat costly, which, like most young men of easy income, he had allowed himself at Oxford, was now retained long after it had become practically useless. This was a hunter for himself, and another for his groom, which he continued to keep, in spite of the increasing war-taxes, many a year after he had almost ceased to ride. Once in three or four months he would have the horses saddled and brought out. Then, with considerable effort, he swung himself into the saddle, moved off at a quiet amble, and, in about fifteen or twenty minutes, might be seen returning from an excursion of two miles, under the imagination that he had laid in a stock of exercise sufficient for another period of a hundred days. Meantime Mr. Lawson had sought his main consolation in the great classics of elder days. His senior *alumni* were always working their way through some great scenic poet that had shaken the stage of Athens; and more than one of his classes, never ending, still beginning, were daily solacing him with the gaieties of Horace, in his Epistles or in his Satires. The Horatian jests indeed to *him* never grew old. On coming to the *plagosus Orbilius*, or any other sally of pleasantry, he still threw himself back in his arm-chair, as he *had* done through fifty years, with what seemed heart-shaking bursts of sympathetic merriment. Mr. Lawson, indeed, could afford to be sincerely mirthful over the word *plagosus*. There are gloomy tryants, exulting in the discipline of fear, to whom and to whose pupils this word must call up remembrances too degrading for any but affected mirth. Allusions that are too fearfully personal cease to be subjects of playfulness. Sycophancy only it is that laughs; and the artificial merriment is but the language of shrinking and grovelling deprecation. Different, indeed, was the condition of the Manchester Grammar School. It was honourable both to the masters and the upper boys, through whom only such a result was possible, that in that school, during my knowledge of it (*viz.*, during the closing year of the eighteenth century, and the two opening years of the nineteenth), all punishments, that appealed to the sense of bodily pain, had fallen into disuse; and this at a period long before any public agitation had begun to stir in that direction. How then was discipline maintained? It was maintained through the self-discipline of the senior boys, and through the efficacy of their example, combined with their system of

rules. Noble are the impulses of opening manhood, where they are not utterly ignoble : at that period, I mean, when the poetic sense begins to blossom, and when boys are first made sensible of the paradise that lurks in female smiles. Had the school been entirely a day-school, too probable it is that the vulgar brawling tendencies of boys left to themselves would have prevailed. But it happened that the elder section of the school—those on the brink of manhood, and by incalculable degrees the more scholar-like section, all who read, meditated, or began to kindle into the love of literature—were boarders in Mr. Lawson's house. The students, therefore, of the house carried an overwhelming influence into the school. They were bound together by links of brotherhood ; whereas the day-scholars were disconnected. Over and above this, it happened luckily that there was no playground, not the smallest, attached to the school ; that is, none was attached to the *upper* or *grammar* school. But there was also, and resting on the same liberal endowment, a *lower* school, where the whole machinery of teaching was applied to the lowest mechanical accomplishments of reading and writing. The hall in which this servile business was conducted ran under the upper school ; it was, therefore, I presume, a subterraneous duplicate of the upper hall. And, since the upper rose only by two or three feet above the level of the neighbouring streets, the lower school would naturally have been at a great depth *below* these streets. In that case it would be a dark crypt, such as we see under some cathedrals ; and it would have argued a singular want of thoughtfulness in the founder to have laid one part of his establishment under an original curse of darkness. As the access of this plebeian school lay downwards through long flights of steps, I never found surplus energy enough for investigating the problem. But, as the ground broke away precipitously at that point into lower levels, I presume, upon consideration, that the subterranean crypt will be found open on one side to visitations from sun and moon. So that, for this base mechanic school there may, after all, have been a playground. But for ours in the upper air, I repeat, there was none ; not so much as would have bleached a lady's pocket-handkerchief ; and this one defect carried along with it unforeseen advantages.

Lord Bacon it is who notices the subtle policy which may lurk in the mere external figure of a table. A square table, having an undeniable head and foot, two polar

extremities of what is highest and lowest, a perihelion and an aphelion, together with equatorial sides, opens at a glance a large career to ambition ; whilst a circular table sternly represses all such aspiring dreams, and so does a triangular table. Yet if the triangle should be right-angled, then the Lucifer seated at the right angle might argue that he *subtended* all the tenants of the hypothenuse ; being, therefore, as much nobler than they, as Atlas was nobler than the globe which he carried. It was, by the way, some arrangement of this nature which constituted the original feature of distinction in John o' Groat's house, and not at all (as most people suppose) the high northern latitude of this house. John, it seems, finished the feud for precedence—not by legislating this way or that—but by cutting away the possibility of such feuds through the assistance of a round table. The same principle must have guided King Arthur amongst his knights ; Charlemagne amongst his paladins ; and sailors in their effectual distribution of the peril attached to a mutinous remonstrance by the admirable device of a “round-robin.” Even two little girls, as Harrington remarks in his “Oceana,” have oftentimes hit upon an expedient through pure mother-wit, more effectual than all the schools of philosophy could have suggested, for insuring the impartial division of an orange ; which expedient is, that either of the two shall divide, but then that the other shall have the right of choice. You divide, and I choose. Such is the formula ; and an angel could not devise a more absolute guarantee for the equity of the division, than by thus forcing the divider to become the inheritor of any possible disadvantages that he may have succeeded in creating by his own act of division. In all these cases one seemingly trivial precaution opens, in the next stage, into a world of irresistible consequences. And in our case, an effect not less disproportionate followed out of that one accident, apparently so slight, that we had no playground. We of the seniority, who, by thoughtfulness, and the conscious dignity of dealing largely with literature, were already indisposed to boyish sports, found, through the defect of a playground, that our choice and our pride were also our necessity. Even the proudest of us benefited by that coercion ; for many would else have sold their privilege of pride for an hour's amusement, and have become, at least, occasional conformists. A day more than usually fine, a trial of skill more than usually irritating to the sense of special superiority, would have seduced most of us

in the end into the surrender of our exclusiveness. Indiscriminate familiarity would have followed as an uncontrollable result ; since to mingle with others in common acts of business may leave the sense of reserve undisturbed : but all reserve gives way before a common intercourse in pleasure. As it was, what with our confederation through house-membership, what with our reciprocal sympathies in the problems suggested by books, we had become a club of boys (amongst whom might be four or five that were even young men, counting eighteen or nineteen years), altogether as thoughtful and as self-respecting as can often exist even amongst adults. Even the subterraneous school contributed something to our self-esteem. It formed a subordinate section of our own establishment, that kept before our eyes, by force of contrast, the dignity inherent in our own constitution. Its object was to master humble accomplishments that were within the reach of *mechanic* efforts : everything mechanic is limited ; whereas we felt that *our* object, even if our name of *grammar* school presented that object in what seemed too limited a shape, was substantially noble, and tended towards the infinite. But in no long time I came to see that, as to the *name*, we were all of us under a mistake. Being asked what a *grammar* school indicates, what it professes to teach, there is scarcely any man who would not reply, "Teach ? why it teaches grammar : what else ?" But this is a mistake : as I have elsewhere explained, *grammatica* in this combination does not mean grammar (though grammar also obeys the movements of a most subtle philosophy) but *literature*. Look into Suetonius. Those "*grammatici*" whom he memorialises as an order of men flocking to Rome in the days of the Flavian family, were not *grammarians* at all, but what the French by a comprehensive name styled *litterateurs*—that is, they were men who (1) studied literature ; (2) who taught literature ; (3) who practically produced literature. And, upon the whole, *grammatica* is perhaps the least objectionable Latin equivalent for our word *literature*.

Having thus sketched the characteristic points distinguishing the school and the presiding master (for of masters, senior and junior, there were four in this upper school), I return to my own inaugural examination. On this day, memorable to myself, as furnishing the starting-point for so long a series of days, saddened by haughty obstinacy on one side, made effective by folly on the other, no

sooner had my guardian retired, than Mr. Lawson produced from his desk a volume of the "Spectator," and instructed me to throw into as good Latin as I could some paper of Steele's—not the whole, but perhaps a third part. No better exercise could have been devised for testing the extent of my skill as a Latinist. And here I ought to make an explanation. In the previous edition of these "Confessions," writing sometimes too rapidly, and with little precision in cases of little importance, I conveyed an impression which I had not designed, with regard to the true nature of my pretensions as a Grecian; and something of the same correction will apply to that narrower accomplishment which was the subject of my present examination. Neither in Greek nor in Latin was my *knowledge* very extensive; my age made *that* impossible; and especially because in those days there were no decent guides through the thorny jungles of the Latin language, far less of the Greek. When I mention that the *Port Royal* Greek Grammar translated by Dr. Nugent was about the best key extant in English to the innumerable perplexities of Greek diction; and that, for the *res metrica*, Morell's valuable "Thesaurus," having then never been reprinted, was rarely to be seen, the reader will conclude that a schoolboy's *knowledge* of Greek could not be other than slender. Slender indeed was mine. Yet stop! *what* was slender? Simply my *knowledge* of Greek; for that knowledge stretches by tendency to the infinite; but not therefore my *command* of Greek. The *knowledge* of Greek must always hold some gross proportion to the time spent upon it, probably, therefore, to the age of the student; but the *command* over a language, the power of adapting it plastically to the expression of your own thoughts, is almost exclusively a gift of nature, and has very little connection with time. Take the supreme trinity of Greek scholars that flourished between the English Revolution of 1688 and the beginning of the nineteenth century—which trinity I suppose to be confessedly, Bentley, Valckenaer, and Porson—such are the men, it will be generally fancied, whose aid should be invoked, in the event of our needing some eloquent Greek inscription on a public monument. I am of a different opinion. The greatest scholars have usually proved to be the poorest composers in either of the classic languages. Sixty years ago, we had, from four separate doctors, four separate Greek versions of "Gray's Elegy," all unworthy of the national scholarship. Yet one

of these doctors was actually Porson's predecessor in the Greek chair at Cambridge. But as he (Dr. Cooke) was an obscure man, take an undeniable Grecian, of punctilious precision—viz., Richard Dawes, the well-known author of the "*Miscellanea Critica*." This man, a very *martinet* in the delicacies of Greek composition—and who *should* have been a Greek scholar of some mark, since often enough he flew at the throat of Richard Bentley—wrote and published a specimen of a Greek "*Paradise Lost*," and also two most sycophantic idyls addressed to George II. on the death of his "august" papa. It is difficult to imagine anything meaner in conception or more childish in expression than these attempts. Now, against *them* I will stake in competition a copy of iambic verses by a boy, who died, I believe, at sixteen—viz., a son of Mr. Pitt's tutor, Tomline, Bishop of Winchester.* Universally I contend that the faculty of clothing the thoughts in a Greek dress is a function of natural sensibility, in a great degree disconnected from the extent or the accuracy of the writer's grammatical skill in Greek.

These explanations are too long. The reader will understand, as their sum, that what I needed in such a case was, not so much a critical familiarity with the syntax of the language, or a *copia verborum*, as great agility in reviewing the relations of one idea to another—so as to present modern and unclassical objects under such aspects as might suggest periphrases in substitution for direct names, where names could not be had, and everywhere to colour my translation with as rich a display of idiomatic forms as the circumstances of the case would allow. I succeeded, and beyond my expectation. For once—being the first time that he had been known to do such a thing, but also the very last—Mr. Lawson did absolutely pay me a compliment. And with another compliment more than verbal he crowned his gracious condescensions—viz.,

* "*A copy of iambic verses*":—They will be found in the work on the Greek article, by Middleton, Bishop of Calcutta, who was the boy's tutor. On this occasion I would wish to observe, that verses like Dawes's, meant to mimic Homer or Theocritus, or more generally dactylic hexameters, are perfectly useless as tests of power to think freely in Greek. If such verses are examined, it will be found that the orchestral magnificence of the metre, and the sonorous cadence of each separate line, absolutely *forces* upon the thoughts a mere necessity of being discontinuous. From this signal defect only iambic senarii are free; this metre possessing a power of plastic interfusion similiar in kind, though inferior in degree, to the English blank verse when Miltonically written.

with my provisional instalment in his highest class ; not the highest at that moment, since there was one other class above us ; but this other was on the wing for Oxford within some few weeks ; which change being accomplished, we (viz., I and two others) immediately moved up into the surpeme place.

Two or three days after this examination—viz., on the Sunday following—I transferred myself to head-quarters at Mr. Lawson's house. About nine o'clock in the evening, I was conducted by a servant up a short flight of stairs, through a series of gloomy and unfurnished little rooms, having small windows but no doors, to the common room (as in Oxford it would technically be called) of the senior boys. Everything had combined to depress me. To leave the society of accomplished women — *that* was already a signal privation. The season besides was rainy, which in itself is a sure source of depression ; and the forlorn aspect of the rooms completed my dejection. But the scene changed as the door was thrown open : faces kindling with animation became visible ; and from a company of boys, numbering sixteen or eighteen, scattered about the room, two or three, whose age entitled them to the rank of leaders, came forward to receive me with a courtesy which I had not looked for. The grave kindness and the absolute sincerity of their manner impressed me most favourably. I had lived familiarly with boys gathered from all quarters of the island at the Bath Grammar School ; and for some time (when visiting Lord Altamont at Eton) with boys of the highest aristocratic pretensions. At Bath and at Eton, though not equally, there prevailed a tone of higher polish ; and in the air, speech, deportment of the majority could be traced at once a premature knowledge of the world. They had indeed the advantage over my new friends in graceful self-possession ; but, on the other hand, the best of them suffered by comparison with these Manchester boys in the qualities of visible self-restraint and of self-respect. At Eton, high rank was distributed pretty liberally ; but in the Manchester school, the parents of many boys were artisans, or of that rank ; some even had sisters that were menial servants ; and those who stood higher by pretensions of birth and gentle blood were, at the most, the sons of rural gentry or of clergymen. And I believe that, with the exception of three or four brothers, belonging to a clergyman's family at York, all were, like myself, natives of Lancashire. At that time my experience was too limited to warrant

me in expressing any opinion, one way or the other, upon the relative pretensions—moral and intellectual—of the several provinces in our island. But since then I have seen reason to agree with the late Dr. Cooke Taylor in awarding the pre-eminence, as regards energy, power to face suffering, and other high qualities, to the natives of Lancashire. Even a century back, they were distinguished for the culture of refined tastes. In musical skill and sensibility, no part of Europe, with the exception of a few places in Germany, could pretend to rival them: and accordingly, even in Handel's days, but for the chorus-singers from Lancashire, his oratorios must have remained a treasure, if not absolutely sealed, at any rate most imperfectly revealed.

One of the young men, noticing my state of dejection, brought out some brandy—a form of alcohol which I, for my part, tasted now for the first time, having previously taken only wine, and never once in quantities to affect my spirits. So much the greater was my astonishment at the rapid change worked in my state of feeling—a change which at once reinstalled me in my natural advantages for conversation. Towards this nothing was wanting but a question of sufficient interest. And a question arose naturally out of a remark addressed by one of the boys to myself, implying that perhaps I had intentionally timed my arrival so as to escape the Sunday evening exercise. No, I replied; not at all; what *was* that exercise? Simply an off-hand translation from the little work of Grotius* on the Evidences of Christianity. Did I know the book? No, I did not; all the direct knowledge which I had of Grotius was built upon his metrical translations into Latin of various fragments surviving from the Greek scenical poets, and these translations had struck me as exceedingly beautiful. On the other hand, his work of highest pretension, “*De Jure Belli et Pacis*,” so signally praised by Lord Bacon, I had not read at all; but I had heard such an account of it from a very thoughtful person, as made it probable that Grotius was stronger, and felt himself stronger, on literary than on philosophic ground. Then, with regard to his little work on the Mosaic and Christian revelations, I had heard very disparaging opinions about it; two especially. One amounted to no more than this—that the question was argued with a logic far inferior, in point of cogency, to that of Lardner and Paley. Here

* Entitled “*De Veritate Christianæ Religionis*.”

several boys interposed their loud assent, as regarded Paley in particular. Paley's "Evidences," at that time just seven years old, had already become a subject of study amongst them. But the other objection impeached not so much the dialectic acuteness as the learning of Grotius—at least, the appropriate learning. According to the anecdote current upon this subject, Dr. Edward Pococke, the great Oriental scholar of England in the seventeenth century, when called upon to translate the little work of Grotius into Arabic or Turkish, had replied by pointing to the idle legend of Mahomet's pigeon or dove, as a reciprocal messenger between the prophet and heaven—which legend had been accredited and adopted by Grotius in the blindest spirit of credulity. Such a baseless fable, Pococke alleged, would work a double mischief: not only it would ruin the authority of that particular book in the East, but would damage Christianity for generations, by making known to the followers of the Prophet that their master was undervalued amongst the Franks on the authority of nursery tales, and that these tales were accredited by the leading Frankish scholars.

A twofold result of evil would follow: not only would our Christian erudition and our Christian scholars be scandalously disparaged; a consequence that in some cases might not be incompatible with a sense amongst Mahometans that the strength of Christianity itself was left unaffected by the errors and blunders of its champions; but, secondly, there would in this case be a strong reaction against Christianity itself. Plausibly enough it would be inferred that a vast religious philosophy could have no powerful battery of arguments in reserve, when it placed its main anti-Mahometan reliance upon so childish a fable: since, allowing even for a blameless assent to this fable amongst nations having no direct intercourse with Mussulmans, still it would argue a shocking frailty in Christianity, that its main pleadings rested, not upon any strength of its own, but simply upon a weakness in its antagonist.

At this point, when the cause of Grotius seemed utterly desperate, G—— (a boy whom subsequently I had reason to admire as equally courageous, truthful, and far-seeing) suddenly changed the whole field of view. He offered no defence for the ridiculous fable of the pigeon; which pigeon, on the contrary, he represented as drawing in harness with that Christian goose which at one time was universally believed by Mahometans to lead the vanguard of the

earliest Crusaders, and which, in a limited extent, really had been a true historical personage. So far he gave up Grotius as indefensible. But on the main question, and the very extensive question of his apparent imbecility when collated with Paley, etc., suddenly and in one sentence he revolutionised the whole logic of that comparison. Paley and Lardner, he said, what was it that they sought? *Their* object was—avowedly to benefit by any argument, evidence, or presumption whatsoever, no matter whence drawn, so long as it was true or probable, and fitted to sustain the credibility of any element in the Christian creed. Well, was not *that* object common to them and to Grotius? Not at all. Too often had he (the boy G——) secretly noticed the abstinence of Grotius (apparently unaccountable) from certain obvious advantages of argument, not to suspect that, in narrowing his own field of disputation, he had a deliberate purpose, and was moving upon the line of some very different policy. Clear it was to *him*, that Grotius, for some reason, declined to receive evidence except from one special and limited class of witnesses. Upon this, some of us laughed at such a self-limitation as a wild bravado, recalling that rope-dancing feat of some verse-writers who, through each several stanza in its turn, had gloried in dispensing with some one separate consonant, some vowel, or some diphthong, and thus achieving a triumph such as crowns with laurel that pedestrian athlete who wins a race by hopping on one leg, or wins it under the inhuman condition of confining both legs within a sack. “No, no,” impatiently interrupted G——. “All such fantastic conflicts with self-created difficulties terminate in pure ostentation, and profit nobody. But the self-imposed limitations of Grotius had a special purpose, and realised a value not otherwise attainable.” If Grotius accepts no arguments or presumptions except from Mussulmans, from Infidels, or from those who rank as Neutrals, then has he adapted his book to a separate and peculiar audience. The Neutral man will hearken to authorities notoriously Neutral; Mussulmans will show deference to the statements of Mussulmans; the Sceptic will bow to the reasonings of Scepticism. All these persons, that would have been repelled on the very threshold from such testimonies as begin in a spirit of hostility to themselves, will listen thoughtfully to suggestions offered in a spirit of conciliation; much more so if offered by people occupying the same ground at starting as themselves.

At the cost of some disproportion, I have ventured to rehearse this inaugural conversation amongst the leaders of the school. Whether G—— were entirely correct in this application of a secret key to the little work of Grotius, I do not know. I take blame to myself that I do not; for I also must have been called upon for my quota to the Sunday evening studies on the “De Veritate”; and must therefore have held in my hands the ready means for solving the question.*

Meantime, as a solitary act of silent observation in a boy not fifteen, this deciphering idea of G——’s, in direct resistance to the received idea, extorted my admiration; and equally, whether true or false as regarded the immediate fact. That any person, in the very middle storm of chase, when a headlong movement carries all impulses into one current, should in the twinkling of an eye recall himself to the unexpected “doubles” of the game, wheel as *that* wheels, and sternly resist the instincts of the one pre-occupying assumption, argues a sagacity not often heard of in boyhood. Was G—— right? In that case he picked a lock which others had failed to pick. Was he wrong? In that case he sketched the idea and outline of a better work (better, as more original and more special in its service) than any which Grotius has himself accomplished.

Not, however, the particular boy, but the particular school, it was my purpose, in this place, to signalise for praise and gratitude. In after years, when an undergraduate at Oxford, I had an opportunity of reading as it were in a mirror the characteristic pretensions and the average success of many celebrated schools. Such a mirror I found in the ordinary conversation and in the favourite reading of young gownsmen belonging to the many different colleges of Oxford. Generally speaking, each college had a filial connection (strict † or not strict) with some one or

* Some excuse, however, for my own want of energy is suggested by the fact, that very soon after my matriculation Mr. Lawson substituted for Grotius, as the Sunday evening lecture-book, Dr. Clark’s Commentary on the New Testament. “Out of sight, out of mind”; and in that way only can I account for my own neglect to clear up the question. Or perhaps, after all, I *did* clear it up, and in a long life-march subsequently may have dropped it by the wayside.

† “*Strict or not strict*”:—In some colleges the claims of *alumni* from certain schools were absolute; in some, I believe, conditional; in others, again, concurrent with rival claims from favoured schools or favoured counties.

more of our great public schools. These, fortunately for England, are diffused through all her counties: and as the main appointments to the capital offices in such *public* schools are often vested by law in Oxford or Cambridge, this arrangement guarantees a sound system of teaching; so that any failures in the result must presumably be due to the individual student. Failures, on the whole, I do not suppose that there were. Classical attainments, that might be styled even splendid, were not then, nor are now, uncommon. And yet in one great feature many of those schools, even the very best, when thus tried by their fruits, left a painful memento of failure; or rather not of failure as in relation to any purpose that they steadily recognised, but of *wilful* and *intentional* disregard as towards a purpose alien from any duty of theirs, or any task which they had ever undertaken—a failure, namely, in relation to *modern* literature—a neglect to unroll its mighty charts: and amongst this modern literature a special neglect (such as seems almost brutal) of our own English literature, though pleading its patent of precedency in a voice so trumpet-tongued. To myself, whose homage ascended night and day towards the great altars of English Poetry or Eloquence, it was shocking and revolting to find in high-minded young countrymen, burning with sensibility that sought vainly for a corresponding object, deep unconsciousness of an all-sufficient object—namely, in that great inheritance of our literature which sometimes kindled enthusiasm in our public enemies. How painful to see or to know that vast revelations of grandeur and beauty are wasting themselves for ever—forests teeming with gorgeous life, floral wildernesses hidden inaccessibly; whilst, at the same time, in contraposition to that evil, behold a corresponding evil—viz., that with equal prodigality the great capacities of enjoyment are running also to waste, and are everywhere burning out unexercised—waste, in short, in the world of things *enjoyable*, balanced by an equal waste in the organs and the machineries of enjoyment! This picture—would it not fret the heart of an Englishman? Some years (say twenty) after the era of my own entrance at that Oxford which then furnished me with records so painful of slight regard to our national literature, behold at the court of London a French ambassador, a man of genius blazing (as some people thought) with nationality, but, in fact, with something inexpressibly nobler and deeper—viz., patriotism. For true and unaffected pa-

triotism will show its love in a noble form by sincerity and truth. But nationality, as I have always found, is mean ; is dishonest ; is ungenerous ; is incapable of candour ; and being continually besieged with temptations to falsehood, too often ends by becoming habitually mendacious. This Frenchman above all things valued literature : his own trophies of distinction were all won upon that field : and yet, when called upon to review the literature of Europe, he found himself conscientiously coerced into making his work a mere monument to the glory of one man, and that man the son of a hostile land. The name of Milton, in *his* estimate, swallowed up all others. This Frenchman was Chateaubriand. The personal splendour which surrounded him gave a corresponding splendour to his act. And because he, as an ambassador, was a representative man, this act might be interpreted as a representative act. The tutelary genius of France in this instance might be regarded as bending before that of England. But homage so free, homage so noble, must be interpreted and received in a corresponding spirit of generosity. It was not, like the testimony of Balaam on behalf of Israel, an unwilling submission to a hateful truth ; it was a concession, in the spirit of saintly magnanimity, to an interest of human nature that, *as such*, transcended by many degrees all considerations merely national.

Now, then, with this unlimited devotion to one great luminary of our literary system emblazoned so conspicuously in the testimony of a Frenchman—that is, of one trained and privileged to be a public enemy—contrast the humiliating spectacle of young Englishmen suffered (so far as their training is concerned) to ignore the very existence of this mighty poet. Do I mean, then, that it would have been advisable to place the “Paradise Lost,” and the “Paradise Regained,” and the “Sampson,” in the library of schoolboys ? By no means. That mode of sensibility which deals with the Miltonic sublimity, is rarely developed in boyhood. And these divine works should in prudence be reserved to the period of mature manhood. But then it should be made known that they *are* so reserved ; and upon what principle of reverential regard for the poet himself. In the meantime, selections from Milton, from Dryden, from Pope, and many other writers, though not everywhere appreciable by those who have but small experience of life, would not generally transcend the intellect

or sensibility of a boy sixteen or seventeen years old. And beyond all other sections of literature, the two which I am going to mention are fitted (or might be fitted by skilful management) to engage the interest of those who are no longer boys, but have reached the age which is presumable in English university matriculation—viz., the close of the eighteenth year. Search through all languages, from Benares the mystical, and the banks of the Ganges, travelling westwards to the fountains of the Hudson, I deny that any two such *bibliothecæ* for engaging youthful interest could be brought together as these two which follow:—

First. In contradiction to M. Cousin's recent audacious assertion (redeemed from the suspicion of mendacity simply by the extremity of ignorance on which it reposes) that we English have no tolerable writer of prose subsequent to Lord Bacon, it so happens that the seventeenth century, and specially that part of it concerned in this case—viz., the latter seventy years (A.D. 1628-1700)—produced the highest efforts of eloquence (philosophic, but at the same time rhetorical and impassioned, in a degree unknown to the prose literature of France) which our literature possesses, and not a line of it but is posterior to the death of Lord Bacon. Donne, Chillingworth, Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Milton, South, Barrow, form a *pleiād*, a constellation of seven golden stars, such as no literature can match in their own class. From these seven writers, taken apart from all their contemporaries, I would undertake to build up an entire body of philosophy * upon the supreme interests of humanity. One error of M. Cousin's doubtless lay in overlooking the fact—that all conceivable problems of philosophy can reproduce themselves under a theological mask: and thus he had absolved himself from reading many English books, as presumably mere professional pleadings of Protestant polemics, which are in fact mines inexhaustible of eloquence and philosophic speculation.

Secondly. A full abstract of the English drama from about the year 1580 to the period (say 1635) at which it

* "*Philosophy*":—At this point it is that the main misconception would arise. Theology, and not philosophy, most people will fancy, is likely to form the staple of these writers. But I have elsewhere maintained, that the main bulk of English philosophy has always hidden itself in the English divinity. In Jeremy Taylor, for instance, are exhibited all the *practical* aspects of philosophy; of philosophy as it bears upon Life, upon Ethics, and upon Transcendent Prudence—i.e., briefly upon the Greek *summum bonum*.

was killed by the frost of the Puritanical spirit seasoning all flesh for the Parliamentary War. No literature, not excepting even that of Athens, has ever presented such a multiform theatre, such a carnival display, mask and anti-mask, of impassioned life—breathing, moving, acting, suffering, laughing :

“ Quicquid agunt homines—votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus.” *

—All this, but far more truly and adequately than was or could be effected in that field of composition which the gloomy satirist contemplated, whatsoever in fact our mediæval ancestors exhibited in their “ Dance of Death,” drunk with tears and laughter, may here be reviewed, scenically grouped, draped, and gorgeously coloured. What other national drama can pretend to any competition with this ? The Athenian has in a great proportion perished ; the Roman was killed prematurely by the bloody realities of the amphitheatre, as candle-light by day-light ; the Spanish, even in the hands of Calderon, offers only undeveloped sketchings ; and the French, besides other and profounder objections, to which no justice has yet been done, lies under the signal disadvantage of not having reached its meridian until sixty years (or two generations) after the English. In reality, the great period of the English drama was exactly closing as the French opened : † consequently the

* “ All that is done by men—movements of prayer, panic, wrath, revels of the voluptuous, festivals of triumph, or gladiatorship of the intellect.”—*Juvenal*, in the prefatory lines which rehearse the prevailing themes of his own Satires gathered in the great harvests of Rome.

† It is remarkable that in the period immediately anterior to that of Corneille, a stronger and more *living* nature was struggling for utterance in French tragedy. Guizot has cited from an early drama (I forget whether of Rotrou or of Hardy) one scene most thoroughly impassioned. The situation is that of a prince, who has fixed his love upon a girl of low birth. She is faithful and constant : but the courtiers about the prince, for malicious purposes of their own, calumniate her : the prince is deluded by the plausible air of the slanders which they disperse : he believes them ; but not with the result (anticipated by the courtiers) of dismissing the girl from his thoughts. On the contrary, he is haunted all the more morbidly by her image ; and in a scene which brings before us one of the vilest amongst these slanderers exerting himself to the uttermost in drawing off the prince's thoughts to alien objects, we find the prince vainly attempting any self-control, vainly striving to attend, still he is overruled by the tenderness of his sorrowing love into finding new occasions for awakening thoughts

French lost the prodigious advantage for scenical effects of a romantic and picturesque age. This had vanished when the French theatre culminated; and the natural result was, that the fastidiousness of French taste, by this time too powerfully developed, stifled or distorted the free movements of French genius.

I beg the reader's pardon for this disproportioned digression, into which I was hurried by my love for our great national literature, my anxiety to see it amongst educational resources invested with a ministerial agency of far ampler character, but at all events to lodge a protest against the wholesale neglect of our supreme authors which leaves us open to the stinging reproach of "treading daily with our clouted shoon" (to borrow the words of Comus) upon that which high-minded foreigners regard as the one paramount jewel in our national diadem.

That reproach fell heavily, as my own limited experience inclined me to fear, upon most of our great public schools, otherwise so admirably conducted.* But from the Manchester Grammar School any such reproach altogether rebounded. My very first conversation with the boys had arisen naturally upon a casual topic, and had shown them to be tolerably familiar with the outline of the Christian polemics in the warfare with Jew, Mahometan, Infidel, and Sceptic. But this was an exceptional case; and naturally it happened that most of us sought for the ordinary subjects of our conversational discussions in literature—viz., in our own native literature. Here it was that I learned to feel a deep respect for my new school-fellows: deep it was, then; and a larger experience has made it deeper. I have since known many literary men; men whose profession was literature; who were understood to have dedicated themselves to literature; and who sometimes had with some one special section or little nook of literature an acquaintance critically minute. But amongst such men I have found but three or four who had a know-

of the lost girl in the very words chiefly relied on for calling off his feelings from her image. The scene (as Guizot himself remarks) is thoroughly Shaksperian; and I venture to think that this judgment would have been countersigned by Charles Lamb.

* It will strike everybody that such works as the "Microcosm," conducted notoriously by Eton boys, and therefore, in part, by Canning, as one of their leaders at that period, must have an admirable effect, since not only it must have made it the interest of each contributor, but must even have made it his necessity, to cultivate some acquaintance with his native literature.

ledge which came as near to what I should consider a comprehensive knowledge, as really existed amongst these boys collectively. What one boy had not, another had; and thus, by continual intercourse, the fragmentary contribution of one being integrated by the fragmentary contributions of others, gradually the attainments of each separate individual became, in some degree, the collective attainments of the whole senior common room. It is true, undoubtedly, that some parts of literature were inaccessible, simply because the books were inaccessible to boys at school; for instance, Froissart in the old translation by Lord Berners, now more than three centuries old; and some parts were, to the young, essentially repulsive. But, measuring the general qualifications by that standard which I have since found to prevail amongst professional *litterateurs*, I felt more respectfully towards the majority of my senior school-fellows than ever I had fancied it possible that I should find occasion to feel towards any boys whatever. My intercourse with those amongst them who had any conversational talents, greatly stimulated my intellect.

This intercourse, however, fell within narrower limits soon after the time of my entrance. I acknowledge, with deep self-reproach, that every possible indulgence was allowed to me which the circumstances of the establishment made possible. I had, for example, a private room allowed, in which I not only studied, but also slept at night. The room being airy and cheerful, I found nothing disagreeable in this double use of it. Naturally, however, this means of retirement tended to sequester me from my companions: for, whilst liking the society of some amongst them, I also had a deadly liking (perhaps a morbid liking) for solitude. To make my present solitude the more fascinating, my mother sent me five guineas *extra*, for the purchase of an admission to the Manchester Library; a library which I should not at present think *very* extensive, but which, however, benefited in its composition, as also in its administration, by the good sense and intelligence of some amongst its original committees. These two luxuries were truly and indeed such: but a third, from which I had anticipated even greater pleasure, turned out a total failure; and for a reason which it may be useful to mention, by way of caution to others. This was a pianoforte, together with the sum required for regular lessons from a music-master. But the first discovery I made was, that practice through

eight or even ten hours a day was indispensable towards any great proficiency on this instrument. Another discovery finished my disenchantment: it was this. For the particular purpose which I had in view, it became clear that no mastery of the instrument, not even that of Thalberg, would be available. Too soon I became aware that to the deep voluptuous enjoyment of music, absolute *passiveness* in the hearer is indispensable. Gain what skill you please, nevertheless activity, vigilance, anxiety must always accompany an elaborate effort of musical execution: and so far is that from being reconcilable with the entrancement and lull essential to the true fruition of music, that even if you should suppose a vast piece of mechanism capable of executing a whole oratorio, but requiring, at intervals, a co-operating impulse from the foot of the auditor, even *that*, even so much as an occasional touch of the foot, would utterly undermine all your pleasure. A single psychological discovery, therefore, caused my musical anticipations to evanesce. Consequently, one of my luxuries burst like a bubble at an early stage. In this state of things, when the instrument had turned out a bubble, it followed naturally that the music-master should find himself to be a bubble. But he was so thoroughly good-natured and agreeable, that I could not reconcile myself to such a catastrophe. Meantime, though accommodating within certain limits, this music-master was yet a conscientious man, and a man of honourable pride. On finding, therefore, that I was not seriously making any effort to improve, he shook hands with me one fine day, and took his leave for ever. Unless it were to point a moral and adorn a tale, the piano had then become useless. It was too big to hang upon willows, and willows there were none in that neighbourhood. But it remained for months as a lumbering monument of labour misapplied, of bubbles that had burst, and of musical visions that, under psychological tests, had foundered for ever.

Yes, certainly, this particular luxury—one out of three—had proved a bubble; too surely this had foundered; but not, therefore, the other two. The quiet study, lifted by two storeys above the vapours of earth, and liable to no unseasonable intrusion; the Manchester Library, so judiciously and symmetrically mounted in all its most attractive departments—no class disproportioned to the rest—these were no bubbles; these had not foundered. Oh, wherefore, then, was it—through what inexplicable growth

of evil in myself or in others—that now in the summer of 1802, when peace was brooding over all the land, peace succeeding to a bloody seven years' war, but peace which already gave signs of breaking into a far bloodier war, some dark sympathising movement within my own heart, as if echoing and repeating in mimicry the political menaces of the earth, swept with storm-clouds across that otherwise serene and radiant dawn which should have heralded my approaching entrance into life. *Inexplicable* I have allowed myself to call this fatal error in my life, because such it *must* appear to others ; since, even to myself, so often as I fail to realise the case by reproducing a reflex impression in kind, and in degree, of the suffering before which my better angel gave way—yes, even to myself this collapse of my resisting energies seems inexplicable. Yet again, in simple truth, now that it becomes possible, through changes worked by time, to tell the *whole* truth (and not, as in former editions, only a part of it), there really was no absolute mystery at all. But this case, in common with many others, exemplifies to my mind the mere impossibility of making full and frank “Confessions,” whilst many of the persons concerned in the incidents are themselves surviving, or (which is worse still), if themselves dead and buried, are yet vicariously surviving in the persons of near and loving kinsmen. Rather than inflict mortifications upon people so circumstanced, any kindhearted man will choose to mutilate his narrative ; will suppress facts, and will mystify explanations. For instance, at this point in my record, it has become my right, perhaps I might say my duty, to call a particular medical man of the penultimate generation a blockhead ; nay, doubtfully, to call him a criminal blockhead. But, could I do this without deep compunction, so long as sons and daughters of his were still living, from whom I, when a boy, had received most hospitable attentions ? Often, on the very same day which brought home to my suffering convictions the atrocious ignorance of papa, I was benefiting by the courtesies of the daughters, and by the scientific accomplishments of the son. Not the less this man, at that particular moment when a crisis of gloom was gathering over my path, became effectually my evil genius. Not that singly perhaps he could have worked any durable amount of mischief : but he, as a co-operator unconsciously with others, sealed and ratified that sentence of stormy sorrow then hanging over my head. Three separate persons, in fact, made

themselves unintentional accomplices in that ruin (a ruin reaching me even at this day by its shadows), which threw me out a homeless vagrant upon the earth before I had accomplished my seventeenth year. Of these three persons, foremost came myself, through my wilful despair and resolute abjuration of all *secondary* hope: since, after all, some mitigation was possible, supposing that perfect relief might *not* be possible. Secondly, came that medical ruffian, through whose brutal ignorance it happened that my malady had not been arrested before reaching an advanced stage. Thirdly, came Mr. Lawson, through whose growing infirmities it had arisen that this malady ever reached its very earliest stage. Strange it was, but not the less a fact, that Mr. Lawson was gradually becoming a curse to all who fell under his influence, through pure zealotry of conscientiousness. Being a worse man, he would have carried far deeper blessings into his circle. If he could have reconciled himself to an imperfect discharge of his duties, he would not have betrayed his insufficiency for those duties. But this he would not hear of. He persisted in travelling over the appointed course to the last inch; and the consequences told most painfully upon the comfort of all around him. By the old traditionary usages of the school, going in at seven A.M., we ought to have been dismissed for breakfast and a full hour's repose at nine. This hour of rest was in strict justice a *debt* to the students—liable to no discount either through the caprice or the tardiness of the supreme master. Yet such were the gradual encroachments upon this hour, that at length the bells of the collegiate church which, by an ancient usage, rang every morning from half-past nine to ten, and through varying modifications of musical key and *rhythmus* that marked the advancing stages of the half-hour, regularly announced to us, on issuing from the school-room, that the bread and milk which composed our simple breakfast must be despatched at a pace fitter for the fowls of the air than students of Grecian philosophy. But was no compensatory encroachment for our benefit allowed upon the next hour from ten to eleven? Not for so much as the fraction of a second. Inexorably as the bells, by stopping, announced the hour of ten, was Mr. Lawson to be seen ascending the steps of the school; and he that suffered most by this rigorous exaction of duties, could not allege that Mr. Lawson suffered less. If he required others to pay, he also paid up to the last

farthing. The same derangement took place, with the same refusal to benefit by any indemnification, at what *should* have been the two-hours' pause for dinner. Only for some mysterious reason, resting possibly upon the family arrangements of the day-scholars, which, if once violated, might have provoked a rebellion of fathers and mothers, he still adhered faithfully to five o'clock P.M. as the closing hour of the day's labours.

Here then stood arrayed the whole machinery of mischief in good working order; and through six months or more, allowing for one short respite of four weeks, this machinery had been operating with effect. Mr. Lawson, to begin, had (without meaning it, or so much as perceiving it) barred up all avenues from morning to night through which any bodily exercise could be obtained. Two or three chance intervals of five minutes each, and even these not consecutively arranged, composed the whole available fund of leisure out of which any stroll into the country could have been attempted. But in a great city like Manchester the very suburbs had hardly been reached, before that little fraction of time was exhausted. Very soon after Mr. Lawson's increasing infirmities had begun to tell severely in the contraction of our spare time, the change showed itself powerfully in my drooping health. Gradually the liver became affected: and connected with that affection arose, what often accompanies such ailments, profound melancholy. In such circumstances, indeed under any the slightest disturbance of my health, I had authority from my guardians to call for medical advice: but I was not left to my own discretion in selecting the adviser. This person was not a physician, who would of course have expected the ordinary fee of a guinea for every visit; nor a surgeon; but simply an apothecary. In any case of serious illness, a physician would have been called in. But a less costly style of advice was reasonably held to be sufficient in any illness which left the patient strength sufficient to walk about. Certainly it ought to have been sufficient here: for no case could possibly be simpler. Three doses of calomel or blue pill, which unhappily I did not then know, would no doubt have re-established me in a week. But far better, as acting always upon me with a magical celerity and a magical certainty, would have been the authoritative prescription (privately notified to Mr. Lawson) of seventy miles' walking in each week. Unhappily my professional adviser was a comatose old gentle-

man, rich beyond all his needs, careless of his own practice, and standing under that painful necessity (according to the custom then regulating medical practice, which prohibited fees to apothecaries) of seeking his remuneration in excessive deluges of medicine. Me, however, out of pure idleness, he forbore to plague with any *variety* of medicines. With sublime simplicity he confined himself to one horrid mixture, that must have suggested itself to him when prescribing for a tiger. In ordinary circumstances, and with plenty of exercise, no creature could be healthier than myself. But my organisation was perilously frail. And to fight simultaneously with such a malady and such a medicine, seemed really too much. The proverb tells us that three "flittings" are as bad as a fire. Very possibly. And I should think that, in the same spirit of reasonable equation, three such tiger-drenches must be equal to one apoplectic fit, or even to the tiger himself. Having taken two of them, which struck me as quite enough for one life, I declined to comply with the injunction of the label pasted upon each several phial—viz., *Repetatur haustus*; * and, instead of doing any such dangerous thing, called upon Mr. — (the apothecary), begging to know if his art had not amongst its reputed infinity of resources any less abominable, and less shattering to a delicate system than this. "None whatever," he replied. Exceedingly kind he was; insisted on my drinking tea with his really amiable daughters; but continued at intervals to repeat, "None whatever—none whatever"; then, as if rousing himself to an effort, he sang out loudly, "None whatever," which in this final utterance he toned down syllabically into, "whatever—ever—ver—er." The whole wit of man, it seems, had exhausted itself upon the preparation of that one infernal mixture.

Now then we three—Mr. Lawson, the somnolent apothecary, and myself—had amongst us accomplished a climax of perplexity. Mr. Lawson, by mere dint of conscientiousness, had made health for me impossible. The apothecary had subscribed *his* little contribution, by ratifying and trebling the ruinous effects of this sedentariness. And for myself, as last in the series, it now remained to clench the operation by my own little contribution, all that I really had to offer—viz., absolute despair. Those who have ever suffered from a profound derangement of the liver, may happen to know that of human despondencies through

* "Let the draught be repeated."

all their infinite gamut none is more deadly. Hope died within me. I could not look for medical relief, so deep being my own ignorance, so equally deep being that of my official counsellor. I could not expect that Mr. Lawson would modify his system—his instincts of duty being so strong, his incapacity to face that duty so steadily increasing. “It comes then to this,” thought I, “that in myself only there lurks any arrear of help”: as always for every man the ultimate reliance should be on himself. But this *self* of mine seemed absolutely bankrupt; bankrupt of counsel or device—of effort in the way of action, or of suggestion in the way of plan. I had for two months been pursuing with one of my guardians, what I meant for a negotiation upon this subject; the main object being to obtain some considerable abbreviation of my school residence. But *negotiation* was a self-flattering name for such a correspondence, since there never had been from the beginning any the slightest leaning on my guardian’s part towards the shadow or pretence of a compromise. What compromise, indeed, was possible where neither party could concede a *part*, however small: the *whole* must be conceded, or nothing: since no *mezzo termine* was conceivable. In reality, when my eyes first glanced upon that disagreeable truth—that no opening offered for *reciprocal* concession, that the concession must all be on one side—naturally it struck me that no guardian could be expected to do *that*. At the same moment it also struck me, that my guardian had all along never for a moment been arguing with a view to any *practical* result, but simply in the hope that he might win over my assent to the reasonableness of what, reasonable or not, was settled immoveably. These sudden discoveries, flashing upon me simultaneously, were quite sufficient to put a summary close to the correspondence. And I saw also, which strangely had escaped me till this general revelation of disappointments, that any individual guardian—even if he *had* been disposed to concession—was but one after all amongst five. Well: this amongst the general blackness really brought a gleam of comfort. If the whole object on which I had spent so much excellent paper and midnight tallow (I am ashamed to use so vile a word, and yet truth forbids me to say *oil*), if this would have been so nearly worthless when gained, then it became a kind of pleasure to have lost it. All considerations united now in urging me to waste no more of either rhetoric, tallow, or logic, upon my impassive granite block of a guardian.

Indeed, I suspected, on reviewing his last communication, that he had just reached the last inch of his patience, or (in nautical diction) had "paid out" the entire cable by which he swung; so that if I, acting on the apothecary's precedent of "*repetatur haustus*," had endeavoured to administer another bolus or draught of expostulation, he would have followed my course as to the tiger-drench, in applying his potential *No* to any such audacious attempt. To my guardian, meantime, I owe this justice—that, over and above the absence on my side of any arguments, wearing even a colourable strength (for to him the suffering from biliousness must have been a mere word), he had the following weighty consideration to offer, "which even this foolish boy" (to himself he would say) "will think material some three years ahead." My patrimonial income, at the moment of my father's death, like that of all my brothers (then three), was exactly £150 per annum.* Now, according to the current belief, or boldly, one might say, according to the avowed traditional maxim throughout England, such an income was too little for an under-graduate, keeping his four terms annually at Oxford or Cambridge. Too little—by how much? By £50: the adequate income being set down at just £200. Consequently the precise sum by which my income was supposed (falsely supposed, as subsequently my own experience convinced me) to fall short of the income needed for Oxford, was that very sum which the funds of the Manchester Grammar School allocated to every student resident for a period of three years; and allocated not merely through a corresponding period of three years, but of seven years. Strong should have been the reasons that could neutralise such overwhelming pleadings of just and honourable prudence for submitting to the further residence required. O reader, urge not the crying arguments that spoke so tumultuously against me. Too sorrowfully I feel them. Out of thirty-six months' residence required, I had actually completed nineteen—*i.e.*, the better half. Still, on the other hand, it is true that my sufferings were almost insupportable; and, but for the blind unconscious conspiracy

* "*£150 per annum*":—Why in a long minority of more than fourteen years this was not improved, I never could learn. Nobody was open to any suspicion of positive embezzlement: and yet this case must be added to the other cases of passive neglects and negative injuries, which so extensively disfigure the representative picture of guardianship all over Christendom.

of two persons, these sufferings would either (1) never have existed; or (2) would have been instantly relieved. In a great city like Manchester lay, probably, a ship-load of that same mercury which, by one fragment, not so large as an acorn, would have changed the colour of a human life, or would have intercepted the heavy funeral-knell—heavy, though it may be partially muffled—of his own fierce self-reproaches.

But now, at last, came over me, from the mere excess of bodily suffering and mental disappointments, a frantic and rapturous re-agency. In the United States the case is well known, and many times has been described by travellers, of that furious instinct which, under a secret call for saline variations of diet, drives all the tribes of buffaloes for thousands of miles to the common centre of the “Salt-licks.” Under such a compulsion does the locust, under such a compulsion does the leeming, traverse its mysterious path. They are deaf to danger, deaf to the cry of battle, deaf to the trumpets of death. Let the sea cross their path, let armies with artillery bar the road, even these terrific powers can arrest only by destroying; and the most frightful abysses, up to the very last menace of engulfment, up to the very instant of absorption, have no power to alter or retard the line of their inexorable advance.

Such an instinct it was, such a rapturous command—even so potent, and alas! even so blind—that, under the whirl of tumultuous indignation and of new-born hope, suddenly transfigured my whole being. In the twinkling of an eye, I came to an adamantine resolution—not as if issuing from any act or any choice of my own, but as if passively received from some dark oracular legislation external to myself. That I would elope from Manchester—this was the resolution. *Abscond* would have been the word, if I had meditated anything criminal. But whence came the indignation, and the hope? The indignation arose naturally against my three tormentors (guardian, Archididascalus, and the professor of tigrology); for those who *do* substantially co-operate to one result, however little designing it, unavoidably the mind unifies as a hostile confederacy. But the hope—how shall I explain *that*? Was it the first-born of the resolution, or was the resolution the first-born of the hope? Indivisibly they went together, like thunder and lightning; or each interchangeably ran before and after the other. Under that transcendent rapture which the prospect of sudden liberation let loose, all that

natural anxiety which should otherwise have interlinked itself with my anticipations was actually drowned in the blaze of joy, as the light of the planet Mercury is lost and confounded on sinking too far within the blaze of the solar beams. Practically I felt no care at all stretching beyond two or three weeks. Not as being heedless and improvident; my tendencies lay generally in the other direction. No; the cause lurked in what Wordsworth, when describing the festal state of France during the happy morning-tide of her First Revolution (1788-1790), calls the "*senselessness of joy*": this it was, joy—headlong—frantic—irreflective—and (as Wordsworth truly calls it), for that very reason, *sublime**—which swallowed up all capacities of rankling care or heart-corroding doubt. I was, I had been long a captive: I was in a house of bondage: one fulminating word—*Let there be freedom*—spoken from some hidden recess in my own will, had by as an earthquake rent asunder my prison gates. At any minute I could walk out. Already I trod by anticipation the sweet pastoral hills, already I breathed gales of the everlasting mountains, that to my feelings blew from the garden of Paradise; and in that vestibule of an earthly heaven, it was no more possible for me to see vividly or in any lingering detail the thorny cares which might hereafter multiply around me, than amongst the roses of June, and on the loveliest of June mornings, I could gather depression from the glooms of the last December. To go was settled. But *when* and *whither*? *When* could have but one answer, for on more reasons than one I needed summer weather: and as much of it as possible. Besides that, when August came, it would bring along with it my own birth-day: now, one codicil in my general vow of freedom had been, that my seventeenth birth-day should not find me at school. Still I needed some trifle of preparation. Especially I needed a little money. I wrote, therefore, to the only confidential friend that I had—viz., Lady Carbery. Originally, as early friends of my mother's, both she and Lord Carbery had distinguished me at Bath and elsewhere, for some years, by flattering attentions; and for the last three years in particular, Lady Carbery, a young woman, some ten years older than myself, and

* "The senselessness of joy was then sublime."—Wordsworth at Calais in 1802 (see his sonnets), looking back through thirteen years to the great era of social resurrection, in 1788-9, from a sleep of ten centuries.

who was as remarkable for her intellectual pretensions as she was for her beauty and benevolence, had maintained a correspondence with me upon questions of literature. She thought too highly of my powers and attainments, and everywhere spoke of me with an enthusiasm that, if I had been five or six years older, and had possessed any personal advantages, might have raised smiles at her expense. To her I now wrote, requesting the loan of five guineas. A whole week passed without any answer. This perplexed and made me uneasy: for her ladyship was rich by a vast fortune removed entirely from her husband's control; and, as I felt assured, would have cheerfully sent me twenty times the sum asked, unless her sagacity had suggested some suspicion (which seemed impossible) of the real purposes which I contemplated in the employment of the five guineas. Could I incautiously have said anything in my own letter tending that way? Certainly not; then why—— But at that moment my speculations were cut short by a letter bearing a coroneted seal. It was from Lady Carbery, of course, and enclosed ten guineas instead of five. Slow in those days were the mails; besides which, Lady Carbery happened to be down at the seaside, whither my letter had been sent after her. Now, then, including my own pocket-money, I possessed a dozen guineas, which seemed sufficient for my immediate purpose; and all ulterior emergencies, as the reader understands, I trampled under foot. This sum, however, spent at inns on the most economic footing, could not have held out for much above a calendar month; and as to the plan of selecting secondary inns, these are not always cheaper; but the main objection is—that in the solitary stations amongst the mountains (Cambrian no less than Cumbrian) there is often no choice to be found: the high-priced inn is the only one. Even this dozen of guineas it became necessary to diminish by three. The age of “vails” and perquisites to three or four servants at any gentleman's house where you dined—this age, it is true, has passed away by thirty years perhaps. But that flagrant abuse had no connection at all with the English custom of distributing money amongst that part of the domestics whose daily labours may have been increased by a visitor's residence in the family for some considerable space of time. This custom (almost peculiar, I believe, to the English gentry) is honourable and just. I personally had been trained by my mother, who detested sordid habits,

to look upon it as ignominious in a gentleman to leave a household without acknowledging the obliging services of those who cannot openly remind him of their claims. On this occasion, mere necessity compelled me to overlook the housekeeper: for to her I could not have offered less than two or three guineas; and, as she was a fixture, I reflected that I might send it at some future period. To three inferior servants I found that I ought not to give less than one guinea each: so much, therefore, I left in the hands of G——, the most honourable and upright of boys; since to have given it myself would have been prematurely to publish my purpose. These three guineas deducted, I still had nine, or thereabouts. And now all things were settled, except one: the *when* was settled, and the *how*; but not the *whither*. That was still *sub judice*.

My plan originally had been to travel northwards—viz., to the region of the English Lakes. That little mountainous district lying stretched like a pavilion between four well-known points—viz., the small towns of Ulverstone and Penrith at its two poles—south and north; between Kendal, again, on the east, and Egremont on the west, measuring on the one diameter about forty miles, and on the other perhaps thirty-five—had for me a secret fascination, subtle, sweet, fantastic, and even from my seventh or eighth year, spiritually strong. The southern section of that district, about eighteen or twenty miles long, which bears the name of Furness, figures in the eccentric geography of English law as a section of Lancashire, though separated from that county by the estuary of Morecambe Bay: and therefore, as Lancashire happened to be my own native county, I had from childhood, on the strength of this mere legal fiction, cherished as a mystic privilege, slender as a filament of air, some fraction of denizenship in the fairy little domain of the English lakes. The major part of these lakes lies in Westmoreland and Cumberland: but the sweet reposing little water of Esthwaite, with its few emerald fields, and the grander one of Coniston, with the sublime cluster of mountain groups, and the little network of quiet dells lurking about its head* all the way back to Grasmere, lie in or near the upper chamber of Furness; and all these, together

* "*Its head*":—That end of a lake which receives the rivulets and brooks feeding its waters, is locally called its *head*; and in continuation of the same constructive image, the counter terminus, which discharges its surplus water, is called its *foot*. By the way, as a suggestion from this obvious distinction, I may remark, that in

with the ruins of the once glorious abbey, had been brought out not many years before into sunny splendour by the great enchantress of that generation—Anne Radcliffe. But more even than Anne Radcliffe had the landscape painters, so many and so various, contributed to the glorification of the English lake district; drawing out and impressing upon the heart the sanctity of repose in its shy recesses—its Alpine grandeurs in such passes as those of Wastdale-head, Langdale-head, Borrowdale, Kirkstone, Hawsdale, etc., together with the monastic peace which seems to brood over its peculiar form of pastoral life, so much nobler (as Wordsworth notices), in its stern simplicity and continual conflict with danger hidden in the vast draperies of mist overshadowing the hills, and amongst the armies of snow and hail arrayed by fierce northern winters, than the effeminate shepherd's life in the classical Arcadia, or in the flowery pastures of Sicily.

Amongst these attractions that drew me so strongly to the Lakes, there had also by that time arisen in this lovely region the deep, deep magnet (as to me *only* in all this world it then was) of William Wordsworth. Inevitably this close connection of the poetry which most of all had moved me with the particular region and scenery that most of all had fastened upon my affections, and led captive my imagination, was calculated, under ordinary circumstances, to impress upon my fluctuating deliberations a summary and decisive bias. But the very depth of the impressions which had been made upon me, either as regarded the poetry or the scenery, was too solemn and (unaffectedly I may say it) too spiritual, to

all cases the very existence of a head and a foot to any sheet of water defeats the malice of Lord Byron's sneer against the lake poets, in calling them by the contemptuous designation of "*pond poets*"; a variation which some part of the public readily caught up as a natural reverberation of that spitefulness, so petty and apparently so groundless, which notoriously Lord Byron cherished against Wordsworth steadily, and more fitfully against Southey. The effect of transforming a living image—an image of restless motion—into an image of foul stagnation was tangibly apprehensible. But what was it that contradistinguished the "*vivi lacus*" of Virgil from rotting ponds mantled with verdant slime? To have, or *not* to have, a head and a foot (*i.e.*, a principle of perpetual change), is at the very heart of this distinction; and to substitute for *lake* a term which ignores and negatives the very differential principle that constitutes a lake—*viz.*, its current and its eternal mobility—is to offer an insult, in which the insulted party has no interest or concern.

clothe itself in any hasty or chance movement as at all adequately expressing its strength, or reflecting its hallowed character. If you, reader, were a devout Mahometan, throwing gazes of mystical awe daily towards Mecca, or were a Christian devotee looking with the same rapt adoration to St. Peter's at Rome, or to El Kodah—the Holy City of Jerusalem—(so called even amongst the Arabs, who hate both Christian and Jew), how painfully would it jar upon your sensibilities, if some friend, sweeping past you upon a high road, with a train (according to the circumstances) of dromedaries or of wheel carriages, should suddenly pull up, and say, “Come, old fellow, jump up alongside of me, I'm off for the Red Sea, and here's a spare dromedary”; or “off for Rome, and here's a well-cushioned barouche”; seasonable and convenient it might happen that the invitation were; but still it would shock you that a journey which, with or without your consent, could not *but* assume the character eventually of a saintly pilgrimage, should arise and take its initial movement upon a casual summons, or upon a vulgar opening of momentary convenience. In the present case, under no circumstances should I have dreamed of presenting myself to Wordsworth. The principle of “veneration” (to speak phrenologically) was by many degrees too strong in me for any such overture on my part. Hardly could I have found the courage to meet and to answer such an overture coming from *him*. I could not even tolerate the prospect (as a bare possibility) of Wordsworth's hearing my name first of all associated with some case of pecuniary embarrassment. And apart from all *that*, it vulgarised the whole “interest” (no other term can I find to express the case collectively)—the whole “interest” of poetry and the enchanted land: equally it vulgarised person and thing, the vineyard and the vintage, the gardens and the ladies, of the Hesperides, together with all their golden fruitage, if I should rush upon them in a hurried and thoughtless state of excitement. I remembered the fine caution on this subject involved in a tradition preserved by Pausanias. Those (he tells us) who visited by night the great field of Marathon (where at certain times phantom cavalry careered—flying and pursuing) in a temper of vulgar sight-seeking, and under no higher impulse than the degrading one of curiosity, were met and punished severely in the dark, by the same sort of people, I presume, as those who handled Falstaff so roughly in the venerable shades of Windsor:

whilst loyal visitors, who came bringing a true and filial sympathy with the grand deeds of their Athenian ancestors, who came as children of the same hearth, met with the most gracious acceptance, and fulfilled all the purposes of a pilgrimage or sacred mission. Under my present circumstances, I saw that the very motives of love and honour, which would have inclined the scale so powerfully in favour of the northern lakes, were exactly those which drew most heavily in the other direction—the circumstances being what they were as to hurry and perplexity. And just at that moment suddenly unveiled itself another powerful motive against taking the northern direction—viz., consideration for my mother—which made my heart recoil from giving her too great a shock; and in what other way could it be mitigated than by my personal presence in a case of emergency? For such a purpose North Wales would be the best haven to make for, since the road thither from my present home lay through Chester—where at that time my mother had fixed her residence.

If I had hesitated (and hesitate I did very sincerely) about such a mode of expressing the consideration due to my mother, it was not from any want of decision in my feeling, but really because I feared to be taunted with this act of tenderness, as arguing an exaggerated estimate of my own importance in my mother's eyes. To be capable of causing any alarming shock, must I not suppose myself an object of special interest? No: I did not agree to that inference. But no matter. Better to stand ten thousand sneers, than one abiding pang, such as time could not abolish, of bitter self-reproach. So I resolved to face this taunt without flinching, and to steer a course for St. John's Priory—my mother's residence near Chester. At the very instant of coming to this resolution, a singular accident occurred to confirm it. On the very day before my rash journey commenced, I received through the post-office a letter bearing this address in a foreign handwriting—*A Monsieur Monsieur de Quincy, Chester*. This iteration of the *Monsieur* as a courteous French fashion * for effecting something equi-

* "*As a courteous French fashion*":—And not at all a modern fashion. That famous Countess of Derby (Charlotte de Tremouille) who presided in the defence of Lathom House (which, and not Knowsley, was then the capital domicile of the Stanleys), when addressing Prince Rupert, sometimes superscribes her envelope *A Monseigneur le Prince Rupert*, but sometimes *A Monsieur Monsieur le Prince Rupert*. This was in 1644, the year of Marston Moor, and the penultimate year of the Parliamentary War.

valent to our own *Esquire*, was to me at that time an unintelligible novelty. The best way to explain it was to read the letter, which, to the extent of *mon possible*, I did ; but vainly attempted to decipher. So much, however, I spelled out as satisfied me that the letter could not have been meant for myself. The post-mark was, I think, *Hamburgh* : but the date within was from some place in Normandy ; and eventually it came out that the person addressed was a poor emigrant, some relative of Quatremère de Quincy,* who had come to Chester, probably as a teacher of French ; and now in 1802 found his return to France made easy by the brief and hollow peace of Amiens. Such an obscure person was naturally unknown to any English post-office ; and the letter had been forwarded to myself, as the oldest male member of a family at that time necessarily well-known in Chester.

I was astonished to find myself translated by a touch of the pen not only into a *Monsieur*, but even into a self-multiplied *Monsieur* ; or, speaking algebraically, into the square of *Monsieur* ; having a chance at some future day of being perhaps cubed into *Monsieur*³. From the letter, as I had hastily torn it open, out dropped a draft upon Smith, Payne, & Smith for somewhere about forty guineas. At this stage of the revelations opening upon me, it might be fancied that the interest of the case thickened : since undoubtedly, if this windfall could be seriously meant for myself, *and no mistake*, never descended upon the head of man, in the outset of a perilous adventure, aid more seasonable, nay, more melodramatically critical. But alas ! my eye is quick to value the logic of evil chances. Prophet of evil I ever am to myself : forced for ever into sorrowful auguries that I have no power to hide from my own heart, no, not through one night's solitary dreams. In a moment I saw too plainly that I was not *Monsieur*². I might be *Monsieur*, but not *Monsieur to the second power*. Who indeed could be *my* debtor to the amount of forty guineas ? If there really *was* such a person, why had he

* "*De Quincy*" :—The family of De Quincey, or Quincy, or Quincie (spelt of course, like all proper names, under the anarchy prevailing as to orthography until the last one hundred and fifty years, in every possible form open to human caprice), was originally Norwegian. Early in the eleventh century this family emigrated from Norway to the South ; and since then it has thrown off three separate swarms—French, English, and Anglo-American, each of which writes the name with its own slight variations. A brief outline of their migrations will be found in the Appendix. Page 225.

been so many years in liquidating his debt ? How shameful to suffer me to enter upon my seventeenth year, before he made known his debt or even his amiable existence. Doubtless, in strict morals, this dreadful procrastination could not be justified. Still, as the man was apparently testifying his penitence, and in the most practical form (*viz.*, payment), I felt perfectly willing to grant him absolution for past sins, and a general release from all arrears, if any should remain, through all coming generations. But alas ! the mere seasonableness of the remittance floored my hopes. A five-guinea debtor might have been a conceivable being ; such a debtor might exist in the flesh : *him* I could believe in ; but further my faith would not go ; and if the money were, after all, *bonâ fide* meant for myself, clearly it must come from the Fiend : in which case it became an open question whether I ought to take it. At this stage the case had become a Sphinx's riddle ; and the solution, if any, must be sought in the letter. But, as to the letter, O heaven and earth ! if the Sphinx of old conducted her intercourse with Oedipus by way of letter, and propounded her wicked questions through the post-office of Thebes, it strikes me that she needed only to have used French penmanship, in order to baffle that fatal decipherer of riddles for ever and ever. At Bath, where the French emigrants mustered in great strength (six thousand, I have heard) during the three closing years of the last century, I, through my mother's acquaintance with several leading families amongst them, had gained a large experience of French calligraphy. From this experience I had learned that the French aristocracy still persisted (*did* persist at that period—1797-1800) in a traditional contempt for all accomplishments of that class as clerkly and plebeian, fitted only (as Shakspeare says, when recording similar prejudices amongst his own countrymen) to do "yeoman's service." One and all they delegated the care of their spelling to *valets* and *femmes-de-chambre* ; sometimes even those persons who scoured their blankets and counterpanes, scoured their spelling—that is to say, their week-day spelling ; but as to their Sunday spelling, that superfine spelling which they reserved for their efforts in literature, this was consigned to the care of compositors. Letters written by the royal family of France in 1792-3 still survive, in the memoirs of Cléry and others amongst their most faithful servants, which display the utmost excess of ignorance as to grammar and orthography. Then, as to the penmanship, all seemed

to write the same hand, and with the same piece of most ancient wood, or venerable skewer; all alike scratching out stiff perpendicular letters, as if executed (I should say) with a pair of snuffers. I do not speak thus in any spirit of derision. Such accomplishments were *wilfully* neglected, and even ambitiously, as if in open proclamation of scorn for the arts by which humbler people oftentimes got their bread. And a man of rank would no more conceive himself dishonoured by any deficiencies in the snobbish accomplishments of penmanship, grammar, or correct orthography, than a gentleman amongst ourselves by inexpertness in the mystery of cleaning shoes, or by polishing furniture. The result, however, from this systematic and ostentatious neglect of calligraphy is oftentimes most perplexing to all who are called upon to decipher their MSS. It happens, indeed, that the product of this carelessness thus far differs: always it is coarse and inelegant, but sometimes (say in 1-20th of the cases) it becomes specially legible. Far otherwise was the case before me. Being greatly hurried on this my farewell day, I could not make out two consecutive sentences. Unfortunately one-half of a sentence sufficed to show that the enclosure belonged to some needy Frenchman living in a country not his own, and struggling probably with the ordinary evils of such a condition—friendlessness and exile. Before the letter came into my hands, it had already suffered some days' delay. When I noticed this, I found my sympathy with the poor stranger naturally quickened. Already, and unavoidably, he had been suffering from the vexation of a letter delayed; but henceforth, and continually more so, he must be suffering from the anxieties of a letter gone astray. Throughout this farewell day I was unable to carve out any opportunity for going up to the Manchester Post-office; and without a distinct explanation in my own person, exonerating myself, on the written acknowledgment of the post-office, from all farther responsibility, I was most reluctant to give up the letter. It is true, that the necessity of committing a forgery (which crime in those days was punished inexorably with death), before the money could have been fraudulently appropriated, would, *if made known to the public*, have acquitted any casual holder of the letter from all suspicion of dishonest intentions. But the danger was, that during the suspense and progress of the case, whilst awaiting its final settlement, ugly rumours should arise and cling to

one's name amongst the many that would hear only a fragmentary version of the whole affair.

At length all was ready : midsummer, like an army with banners, was moving through the heavens : already the longest day had passed ; those arrangements, few and imperfect, through which I attempted some partial evasion of disagreeable contingencies likely to arise, had been finished : what more remained for me to do of things that I was able to do ? None ; and yet, though now at last free to move off, I lingered ; lingered as under some sense of dim perplexity, or even of relenting love for the very captivity itself which I was making so violent an effort to abjure, but more intelligibly for all the external objects—living or inanimate—by which that captivity had been surrounded and gladdened. What I was hastening to desert, nevertheless I grieved to desert ; and but for the foreign letter, I might have long continued to loiter and procrastinate. That, however, through various and urgent motives which it suggested, quickened my movements ; and the same hour which brought this letter into my hands, witnessed my resolution (uttered *audibly* to myself in my study), that early on the next day I would take my departure. A day, therefore, had at length arrived, had somewhat suddenly arrived, which would be the last, the very last, on which I should make my appearance in the school.

It is a just and a feeling remark of Dr. Johnson's, that we never do anything consciously for the last time (of things, that is to say, which we have been long in the habit of doing), without sadness of heart. The secret sense of a farewell or testamentary act I carried along with me into every word or deed of this memorable day. Agent or patient, singly or one of a crowd, I heard for ever some sullen echo of valediction in every change, casual or periodic, that varied the revolving hours from morning to night. Most of all I felt this valedictory sound as a pathetic appeal, when the closing hour of five p.m. brought with it the solemn evening service of the English Church—read by Mr. Lawson ; read now, as always, under a reverential stillness of the entire school. Already in itself, without the solemnity of prayers, the decaying light of the dying day suggests a mood of pensive and sympathetic sadness. And if the changes in the light are less impressively made known so early as five o'clock in the depth of summer-tide, not the less we are sensible of

being as near to the hours of repose, and to the secret dangers of the night, as if the season were mid-winter. Even thus far there was something that oftentimes had profoundly impressed me in this evening liturgy, and its special prayer against the perils of darkness. But greatly was that effect deepened by the symbolic treatment which this liturgy gives to this darkness and to these perils. Naturally, when contemplating that treatment, I had been led vividly to feel the memorable *rhabdomancy* * or magical

* "*Rhabdomancy*":—The Greek word *manteia* (μαντεία), represented by the English form *mancy*, constitutes the stationary element in a large family of compounds: it means *divination*, or the art of magically deducing some weighty inference (generally prophetic) from any one of the many dark sources sanctioned by Pagan superstition. And universally the particular source relied on is expressed in the prior half of the compound. For instance, *oneiros* is the Greek word for a dream; and therefore *oneiromancy* indicates that mode of prophecy which is founded upon the interpretation of dreams. *Ornis*, again (in the genitive case *ornithos*), is the common Greek word for a bird; accordingly, *ornithomancy* means prophecy founded on the particular mode of flight noticed amongst any casual gathering of birds. *Cheir* (χείρ) is Greek for the hand; whence *cheiromancy* expresses the art of predicting a man's fortune by the lines in his hand, or (under its Latin form from *palma*) *palmistry*. *Nekros*, a dead man, and consequently *necromancy*, prophecy founded on the answer extorted either from phantoms, as by the Witch of Endor; or from the corpse itself, as by Lucan's witch Erietho. I have allowed myself to wander into this ample illustration of the case, having for many years been taxed by ingenuous readers (confessing their own classical ignorance) with too scanty explanations of my meaning. I go on to say that the Greek word *rhabdos* (ράβδος), a rod—not that sort of rod which the Roman lictors carried—viz., a bundle of twigs, but a wand about as thick as a common cedar pencil, or, at most, as the ordinary brass rod of stair-carpet—this, when made from a willow-tree, furnished of old, and furnishes to this day in a southern county of England, a potent instrument of divination. But let it be understood that *divination* expresses an idea ampler by much than the word *prophecy*: whilst even this word *prophecy*, already more limited than divination, is most injuriously narrowed in our received translation of the Bible. To unveil or decipher what is hidden—that is, in effect, the meaning of divination. And accordingly, in the writings of St. Paul, the phrase *gifts of prophecy* never once indicates what the English reader supposes, but *exegetic* gifts, gifts of interpretation applied to what is dark, of analysis applied to what is logically perplexed, of expansion applied to what is condensed, of practical improvement applied to what might else be overlooked as purely speculative. In Somersetshire, which is a county the most ill-watered of all in England, upon building a house, there arises uniformly a difficulty in selecting a proper spot for sinking a well. The remedy is—to call in a set of local rhabdomantists. These men traverse the adjacent ground, holding the willow rod horizontally: where-

power of evocation which Christianity has put forth here and in parallel cases. The ordinary physical rhabdomantist, who undertakes to evoke from the dark chambers of our earth wells of water lying far below its surface, and more rarely to evoke minerals, or hidden deposits of jewels and gold, by some magnetic sympathy between his rod and the occult object of his divination, is able to indicate the spot at which this object can be hopefully sought for. Not otherwise has the marvellous magnetism of Christianity called up from darkness sentiments the most august, previously inconceivable—formless—and without life; for previously there had been no religious philosophy equal to the task of ripening such sentiments; but also, at the same time, by incarnating these sentiments in images of corresponding grandeur, has so exalted their character as to lodge them eternally in human hearts.

Flowers, for example, that are so pathetic in their beauty, frail as the clouds, and in their colouring as gorgeous as the heavens, had through thousands of years been the heritage of children—honoured as the jewellery of God only by *them*, when suddenly the voice of Christianity, countersigning the voice of infancy, raised them to a grandeur transcending the Hebrew throne, although founded by God himself, and pronounced Solomon in all his glory not to be arrayed like one of these. Winds

ever that dips, or inclines itself spontaneously to the ground, *there* will be found water. I have myself not only seen the process tried with success, but have witnessed the enormous trouble, delay, and expense, accruing to those of the opposite faction who refused to benefit by this art. To pursue the tentative plan (*i.e.*, the plan of trying for water by boring at hap-hazard) ended, so far as I was aware, in multiplied vexation. In reality, these poor men are, after all, more philosophic than those who scornfully reject their services. For the artists obey unconsciously the logic of Lord Bacon: *they* build upon a long chain of induction, upon the uniform results of their life-long experience. But the counter faction do not deny this experience: all they have to allege is, that, agreeably to any laws known to themselves *à priori*, there ought not to be any such experience. Now, a sufficient course of facts overthrows all antecedent plausibilities. Whatever science or scepticism may say, most of the tea-kettles in the vale of Wrington are filled by *rhabdomancy*. And, after all, the supposed *à priori* scruples against this rhabdomancy are only such scruples as would, antecedently to a trial, have pronounced the mariner's compass impossible. There is in both cases alike a blind sympathy of some unknown force, which no man can explain, with a passive index that practically guides you aright—even if Mephistopheles should be at the bottom of the affair.

again, hurricanes, the eternal breathings, soft or loud, of Æolian power, wherefore had they, raving or sleeping, escaped all moral arrest and detention? Simply because vain it were to offer a nest for the reception of some new moral birth, whilst no religion is yet moving amongst men that can furnish such a birth. Vain is the image that should illustrate a heavenly sentiment, if the sentiment is yet unborn. Then, first, when it had become necessary to the purposes of a spiritual religion that the spirit of man, as the fountain of all religion, should in some commensurate reflex image have its grandeur and its mysteriousness emblazoned, suddenly the pomp and mysterious path of winds and tempests, blowing whither they list, and from what fountains no man knows, are cited from darkness and neglect, to give and to receive reciprocally an impassioned glorification, where the lower mystery enshrines and illustrates the higher. Call for the grandest of all earthly spectacles, what is *that*? It is the sun going to his rest. Call for the grandest of all human sentiments, what is *that*? It is, that man should forget his anger before he lies down to sleep. And these two grandeurs, the mighty sentiment and the mighty spectacle, are by Christianity married together.

Here again, in this prayer, "Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord!" were the darkness and the great shadows of night made symbolically significant: these great powers, Night and Darkness, that belong to aboriginal Chaos, were made representative of the perils that continually menace poor afflicted human nature. With deepest sympathy I accompanied the prayer against the perils of darkness—perils that I seemed to see, in the ambush of midnight solitude, brooding around the beds of sleeping nations; perils from even worse forms of darkness shrouded within the recesses of blind human hearts; perils from temptations weaving unseen snares for our footing; perils from the limitations of our own misleading knowledge.

Prayers had finished. The school had dissolved itself. Six o'clock came, seven, eight. By three hours nearer stood the dying day to its departure. By three hours nearer, therefore, stood we to that darkness which our English liturgy calls into such symbolic grandeur, as hiding beneath its shadowy mantle all perils that besiege our human infirmity. But in summer, in the immediate suburbs of midsummer, the vast scale of the heavenly movements is read in their slowness. Time becomes the ex-

pounder of Space. And now, though eight o'clock had struck, the sun was still lingering above the horizon: the light, broad and gaudy, having still two hours of travel to face before it would assume that tender fading hue prelude to the * twilight. Now came the last official ceremony of the day: the students were all mustered; and the names of all were challenged according to the order of precedence. My name, as usual, came first.† Stepping forward, I passed Mr. Lawson, and bowed to him, looking earnestly in his face, and saying to myself, "He is old and infirm, and in this world I shall not see him again." I was right; I never *did* see him again, nor ever shall. He looked at me complacently; smiled placidly; returned my salutation (not knowing it to be my valediction), and we parted for ever. Intellectually, I might not have seen cause to rever-

* "*To the twilight*":—i.e., to the second twilight: for I remember to have read in some German work upon Hebrew antiquities, and also in a great English divine of 1630 (namely, Isaac Ambrose), that the Jews in elder times made two twilights, first and second: the first they called the dove's twilight, or crepusculum of the day; the second they called the raven's twilight, or crepusculum of the night.

† "*First*":—Within the school I should *not* have been first: for in the trinity which composed the head class there was no absolute or meritorious precedence, but simply a precedence of chance. Our dignity, as leaders of the school, raised us above all petty competitions; yet, as it was unavoidable to stand in some order, this was regulated by seniority. I, therefore, as junior amongst the three, was *tertius inter pares*. But my two seniors happened to be day-scholars: so that, in Mr. Lawson's house, I rose into the supreme place. *There, I was princeps senatûs*. Such trivial circumstantialities I notice, as checks upon all openings to inaccuracy, great or small. It would vitiate the interest which any reader might otherwise take in this narrative, if for one moment it were supposed that any feature of the case were varnished or distorted. From the very first, I had been faithful to the most rigorous law of accuracy—even in absolute trifles. But I became even more jealous over myself, after an Irish critic, specially brilliant as a wit and as a scholar, but also specially malicious, had attempted to impeach the accuracy of my narrative, in its London section, upon alleged internal grounds.

I wish it could have been said with truth, that we of the leading form were, not a triad, but a duad. The facts, however, of the case will not allow me to say this. Facts, as people generally remark, are stubborn things. Yes, and too often very spiteful things; as in this case, where, if it were not for *them*, I might describe myself as having one sole assessor in the class, and in that case he and I might have been likened to Castor and Pollux, who went up and down like alternate buckets—one rising with the dawn (or Phosphorus), and the other (viz., myself) rising with Hesperus, and reigning all night long.

ence him in any emphatic sense. But very sincerely I respected him as a conscientious man, faithful to his duties, and as, even in his latter ineffectual struggle with these duties, inflicting more suffering upon himself than upon others; finally, I respected him as a sound and accurate (though not brilliant) scholar. Personally I owed him much gratitude; for he had been uniformly kind to me, and had allowed me such indulgences as lay in his power; and I grieved at the thought of the mortification I should inflict upon him.

The morning came which was to launch me into the world; that morning from which, and from its consequences, my whole succeeding life has, in many important points, taken its colouring. At half after three I rose, and gazed with deep emotion at the ancient collegiate church, "dress'd in earliest light," and beginning to crimson with the deep lustre of a cloudless July morning. I was firm and immoveable in my purpose, but yet agitated by anticipation of uncertain danger and troubles. To this agitation the deep peace of the morning presented an affecting contrast, and in some degree a medicine. The silence was more profound than that of midnight: and to me the silence of a summer morning is more touching than all other silence, because, the light being broad and strong as that of noonday at other seasons of the year, it seems to differ from perfect day chiefly because man is not yet abroad; and thus, the peace of nature, and of the innocent creatures of God, seems to be secure and deep, only so long as the presence of man, and his unquiet spirit, are not there to trouble its sanctity. I dressed myself, took my hat and gloves, and lingered a little in the room. For nearly a year and a-half this room had been my "pensive citadel": here I had read and studied through all the hours of night; and, though true it was, that, for the latter part of this time, I had lost my gaiety and peace of mind during the strife and fever of contention with my guardian, yet, on the other hand, as a boy passionately fond of books, and dedicated to intellectual pursuits, I could not fail to have enjoyed many happy hours in the midst of general dejection.

Happy hours? Yes; and was it certain that ever again I should enjoy hours as happy? At this point it is not impossible that, left to my own final impressions, I might have receded from my plan. But it seemed to me, as too often happens in such cases, that no retreat was now open.

The confidence which unavoidably I had reposed in a groom of Mr. Lawson's made it dangerous. The effect of this distracted view was, not to alter my plan, but to throw despondency for one sad half-hour over the whole prospect before me. In that condition, with my eyes open, I dreamed. Suddenly a sort of trance, a frost as of some death-like revelation, wrapped round me; and I found renewed within me a hateful remembrance derived from a moment that I had long left behind. Two years before, when I wanted about as much of my fifteenth birth-day as now of my seventeenth, I happened to be in London for part of a single day, with a friend of my own age. Naturally, amongst some eight or ten great spectacles which challenged our earnest attention, St. Paul's Cathedral had been one. This we had visited; and consequently the Whispering Gallery.* More than by all beside I had been impressed by this: and some half-hour later, as we were standing beneath the dome, and I should imagine pretty nearly on the very spot where rather more than five years subsequently Lord Nelson was buried, a spot from which we saw, pompously floating to and fro in the upper spaces of a great aisle running westwards from ourselves, many flags captured from France, Spain, and Holland, I, having my previous impressions of awe deepened by these solemn trophies of chance and change amongst mighty nations, had suddenly been surprised by a dream as profound as at present, in which a thought that often had persecuted me figured triumphantly. This thought turned upon the fatality that must often attend an evil choice. As an oracle of fear I remembered that great Roman warning, *Nescit vox missa reverti* (that a word once uttered is irrevocable), a freezing arrest upon the motions of hope too sanguine, that haunted me in many shapes. Long before that fifteenth year of mine, I had noticed, as a worm lying at the heart of life and fretting its security, the fact that innumerable acts of choice change countenance and are variously appraised at varying stages of life—shift with the shifting hours. Already, at fifteen, I had become deeply ashamed of judgments which I had once pronounced, of

* To those who have never visited the Whispering Gallery, nor have read any account of it amongst other acoustic phenomena described in scientific treatises, it may be proper to mention, as the distinguishing feature of the case, that a word or a question, uttered at one end of the gallery in the gentlest of whispers, is reverberated at the other end in peals of thunder.

idle hopes that I had once encouraged, false admirations or contempts with which once I had sympathised. And as to acts which I surveyed with any doubts at all, I never felt sure that after some succession of years I might not feel withering doubts about them, both as to principle and as to inevitable results.

This sentiment of nervous recoil from any word or deed that could not be recalled had been suddenly re-awakened on that London morning, by the impressive experience of the Whispering Gallery. At the earlier end of the gallery had stood my friend, breathing in the softest of whispers a solemn but not acceptable truth. At the further end, after running along the walls of the gallery, that solemn truth reached me as a deafening menace in tempestuous uproars. And now, in these last lingering moments, when I dreamed ominously with open eyes in my Manchester study, once again that London menace broke angrily upon me as out of a thick cloud with redoubled strength; a voice, too late for warning, seemed audibly to say, "Once leave this house, and a Rubicon is placed between thee and all possibility of return. Thou wilt not say that what thou doest is altogether approved in thy secret heart. Even now thy conscience speaks against it in sullen whispers; but at the other end of thy long life-gallery that same conscience will speak to thee in volleying thunders."

A sudden step upon the stairs broke up my dream, and recalled me to myself. Dangerous hours were now drawing near, and I prepared for a hasty farewell.

I shed tears as I looked round on the chair, hearth, writing-table, and other familiar objects, knowing too certainly that I looked upon them for the last time. Whilst I write this, it is nineteen * years ago; and yet, at this moment, I see, as if it were but yesterday, the lineaments and expressions of the object on which I fixed my parting gaze: it was the picture of a lovely lady, which hung over the mantelpiece; the eyes and mouth of which were so beautiful, and the whole countenance so radiant with divine tranquillity, that I had a thousand times laid down my pen, or my book, to gather consolation from it, as a devotee from his patron saint.† Whilst I was yet gazing

* Written in the August of 1821.

† The housekeeper was in the habit of telling me that the lady had *lived* (meaning, perhaps, had been *born*) two centuries ago; that date would better agree with the tradition that the portrait was a copy from Vandyke. All that she knew further about the

upon it, the deep tones of the old church clock proclaimed that it was six o'clock. I went up to the picture, kissed it, then gently walked out, and closed the door for ever.

So blended and intertwined in this life are occasions of laughter and of tears, that I cannot yet recall, without smiling, an incident which occurred at that time, and which had nearly put a stop to the immediate execution of my plan. I had a trunk of immense weight; for, besides my clothes, it contained nearly all my library. The difficulty was to get this removed to a carrier's: my room being at an aerial elevation in the house, and (what was worse) the staircase which communicated with this angle of the building was accessible only by a gallery, which passed the head-master's chamber-door. I was a favourite with all the servants; and knowing that any of them would screen me, and act confidentially, I communicated my embarrassment to a groom of the head-master's. The groom declared his readiness to do anything I wished; and, when the time arrived, went up-stairs to bring the trunk down. This I feared was beyond the strength of any one man: however, the groom was a man "of Atlantean shoulders," and had a back as spacious as Salisbury Plains. Accordingly he persisted in bringing down the trunk alone, whilst I stood waiting at the foot of the last flight, in great anxiety for the event. For some time I heard him descending with steps slow and steady; but, unfortunately, from his trepidation, as he drew near the dangerous quarter, within a few steps of the gallery, his foot slipped; and the mighty burden, falling from his shoulders, gained such increase of impetus at each step of the descent, that, on reaching the bottom, it trundled, or rather leaped, right across, with the noise of twenty devils, against the very bedroom-door of the Archididascalus. My first thought suggested that all was lost: and that my sole chance for

lady was, that either to the grammar school, or to that particular college at Oxford with which the school was connected, or else to that particular college at Oxford with which Mr. Lawson personally was connected, or else, fourthly, to Mr. Lawson himself as a private individual, the unknown lady had been a special benefactress. She was also a special benefactress to me, through eighteen months, by means of her sweet Madonna countenance. And in some degree it serves to spiritualise and to hallow this service, that of her who unconsciously rendered it I know neither the name, nor the exact rank or age, nor the place where she lived and died. She was parted from me by perhaps two centuries; I from her by the gulf of eternity.

effecting a retreat was—to sacrifice my baggage. However, on reflection, I determined to abide the issue. The groom, meantime, was in the utmost alarm, both on his own account and mine : but, in spite of this, so irresistibly had the sense of the ludicrous, in this unhappy *contretemps*, taken possession of his fancy, that he sang out a long, loud, and canorous peal of laughter, that might have wakened the “Seven Sleepers.” At the sound of this resonant merriment, within the very ears of insulted authority, I could not forbear joining in it ; subdued to this, not so much by the comic wilfulness of the trunk, trundling down from step to step with accelerated pace and multiplying uproar, like the *λᾶς ἀναιδής* * (the contumacious stone) of Sisyphus, as by the effect it had upon the groom. We both expected, as a matter of course, that Mr. Lawson would sally out of his room ; for, in general, if but a mouse stirred, he sprang out like a mastiff from his kennel. Strange to say, however, on this occasion, when the noise of laughter had subsided, no sound, or rustling even, was to be heard in the bedroom. Mr. Lawson had a painful complaint, which oftentimes keeping him awake, made his sleep, when it *did* come, peculiarly deep. Gathering courage from the silence, the groom hoisted his burden again, and accomplished the remainder of his descent without accident. I waited until I saw the trunk placed on a wheelbarrow, and on its road to the carrier’s : then, “with Providence my guide,” or, more truly it might be said, with my own headstrong folly for law and impulse, I set off on foot ; carrying a small parcel with some articles of dress under my arm ; a favourite English poet in one pocket ; and an odd volume, containing about one-half of Canter’s “Euripides,” in the other.

On leaving Manchester, by a south-western route, towards Chester and Wales, the first town that I reached (to the best of my remembrance) was Altrincham—colloquially called *Awtrigem*. When a child of three years old, and suffering from the whooping-cough, I had been carried for change of air to different places on the Lancashire coast ; and, in order to benefit by as large a compass as possible of varying atmospheres, I and my nurse had been made to rest for the first night of our tour at this cheerful little town of Altrincham. On the next morning, which ushered in a most dazzling day of July, I rose earlier than my nurse fully approved : but in no long time she found it advisable

* “*Αὐτὶς ἔπειτα πεδόνδε κυλίνδετο λᾶς ἀναιδής.*”—*Hom. Odys.*

to follow my example ; and, after putting me through my morning's drill of ablutions and the Lord's-prayer, no sooner had she fully arranged my petticoats, than she lifted me up in her arms, threw open the window, and let me suddenly look down upon the gayest scene I had ever beheld—viz., the little market-place of Altrincham, at eight o'clock in the morning. It happened to be the market-day ; and I, who till then had never consciously been in any town whatever, was equally astonished and delighted with the novel gaiety of the scene. Fruits, such as can be had in July, and flowers were scattered about in profusion : even the stalls of the butchers, from their brilliant cleanliness, appeared attractive : and the bonny young women of Altrincham were all tripping about in caps and aprons coquettishly disposed. The general hilarity of the scene at this early hour, with the low murmurings of pleasurable conversation and laughter, that rose up like a fountain to the open window, left so profound an impression upon me that I never lost it. All this occurred, as I have said, about eight o'clock on a superb July morning. Exactly at that time of the morning, on exactly such another heavenly day of July, did I, leaving Manchester at six A.M., naturally enough find myself in the centre of the Altrincham market-place. Nothing had altered. There were the very same fruits and flowers ; the same bonny young women tripping up and down in the same (no, *not* the same) coquettish bonnets ; everything was apparently the same : perhaps the window of my bedroom was still open, only my nurse and I were not looking out ; for alas ! on recollection, fourteen years precisely had passed since then. Breakfast time, however, is always a cheerful stage of the day ; if a man can forget his cares at any season, it is then ; and after a walk of seven miles it is doubly so. I felt it at the time, and have stopped, therefore, to notice it, as a singular coincidence, that twice, and by the merest accident, I should find myself, precisely as the clocks on a July morning were all striking eight, drawing inspiration of pleasurable feelings from the genial sights and sounds in the little market-place of Altrincham. There I breakfasted ; and already by the two hours' exercise I felt myself half restored to health. After an hour's rest, I started again upon my journey : all my gloom and despondency were already retiring to the rear ; and, as I left Altrincham, I said to myself, "All places, it seems, are not Whispering Galleries." The distance between Manchester

and Chester *was* about forty miles. What it *is* under railway changes, I know not. This I planned to walk in two days: for, though the whole might have been performed in one, I saw no use in exhausting myself; and my walking powers were rusty from long disuse. I wished to bisect the journey; and, as nearly as I could expect—*i.e.*, within two or three miles—such a bisection was attained in a clean roadside inn, of the class so commonly found in England. A kind, motherly landlady, easy in her circumstances, having no motive for rapacity, and looking for her livelihood much less to her inn than to her farm, guaranteed to me a safe and profound night's rest. On the following morning there remained not quite eighteen miles between myself and venerable Chester. Before I reached it, so mighty now (as ever before and since) had become the benefit from the air and the exercise, that oftentimes I felt inebriated and crazy with ebullient spirits. But for the accursed letter, which sometimes

“ Came over me,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,”

I should have too much forgot my gravity under this new-born health. For two hours before reaching Chester, from the accident of the south-west course which the road itself pursued, I saw held up aloft before my eyes that matchless spectacle,

“ New, and yet as old
As the foundations of the heavens and earth,”

an elaborate and pompous sunset hanging over the mountains of North Wales. The clouds passed slowly through several arrangements, and in the last of these I read the very scene which six months before I had read in a most exquisite poem of Wordsworth's, extracted entire into a London newspaper (I think the “ St. James's Chronicle ”). It was a Canadian lake,

“ With all its fairy crowds
Of islands that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Amongst the evening clouds.”

The scene in the poem (“ Ruth ”), that had been originally mimicked by the poet from the sky, was here re-mimicked and rehearsed to the life, as it seemed, by the sky from the poet. Was I then, in July, 1802, really quoting from Wordsworth? Yes, reader; and I only in all Europe. In 1799, I

had become acquainted with "We are Seven" at Bath. In the winter of 1801-2, I had read the whole of "Ruth"; early in 1803, I had written to Wordsworth. In May of 1803, I had received a very long answer from Wordsworth.

The next morning after reaching Chester, my first thought on rising was directed to the vexatious letter in my custody. The odious responsibility, thrust upon me in connection with this letter, was now becoming every hour more irritating, because every hour more embarrassing to the freedom of my own movements, since it must by this time have drawn the post-office into the ranks of my pursuers. Indignant I was that this letter should have the power of making myself an accomplice in-causing anxiety, perhaps even calamity, to the poor emigrant—a man doubly liable to unjust suspicion; first, as by his profession presumably poor; and, secondly, as an alien. Indignant I was that this most filthy of letters should also have the power of forcing me into all sorts of indirect and cowardly movements at inns; for beyond all things it seemed to me important that I should not be arrested, or even for a moment challenged, as the wrongful holder of an important letter, before I had testified, by my own spontaneous transfer of it, that I had not dallied with any idea of converting it to my own benefit. In some way I must contrive to restore the letter. But was it not then the simplest of all courses, to take my hat before sitting down to breakfast, present myself at the post-office, tender my explanation, and then (like Christian in Bunyan's allegory) to lay down my soul-wearying burden at the feet of those who could sign my certificate of absolution? Was not *that* simple? Was not *that* easy? Oh yes, beyond a doubt. And if a favourite fawn should be carried off by a lion, would it not be a very simple and easy course to walk after the robber, follow him into his den, and reason with the wretch on the indelicacy of his conduct? In my particular circumstances, the post-office was in relation to myself simply a lion's den. Two separate parties, I felt satisfied, must by this time be in chase of me; and the two chasers would be confluent at the post-office. Beyond all other objects which I had to keep in view, paramount was that of fencing against my own re-capture. Anxious I was on behalf of the poor foreigner; but it did not strike me that to this anxiety I was bound to sacrifice myself. Now, if I went to the post-office, I felt sure that nothing else would be the result; and afterwards it turned out

that in this anticipation I had been right. For it struck me that the nature of the enclosure in the French letter—viz., the fact that without a forgery it was not negotiable—could not be known certainly to anybody but myself. Doubts upon that point must have quickened the anxieties of all connected with myself, or connected with the case. More urgent consequently would have been the applications of “Monsieur Monsieur” to the post-office; and consequently of the post-office to the Priory; and consequently more easily suggested and concerted between the post-office and the Priory would be all the arrangements for stopping me, in the event of my taking the route of Chester—in which case it was natural to suppose that I might *personally* return the letter to the official authorities. Of course none of these measures was certainly known to myself; but I guessed at them as reasonable probabilities; and it was evident that the fifty and odd hours since my elopement from Manchester had allowed ample time for concerting all the requisite preparations. As a last resource, in default of any better occurring, it is likely enough that my anxiety would have tempted me into this mode of surrendering my abominable trust, which by this time I regarded with such eyes of burning malice as Sinbad must have directed at intervals towards the venerable ruffian that sat astride upon his shoulders. But things had not yet come to Sinbad’s state of desperation; so immediately after breakfast I took my hat, determining to review the case and adopt some final decision in the open air. For I have always found it easier to think over a matter of perplexity whilst walking in wide open spaces under the broad eye of the natural heavens, than whilst shut up in a room. But at the very door of the inn I was suddenly brought to a pause by the recollection that some of the servants from the Priory were sure on every forenoon to be at times in the streets. The streets, however, could be evaded by shaping a course along the city walls; which I did, and descended into some obscure lane that brought me gradually to the banks of the river Dee. In the infancy of its course amongst the Denbighshire mountains, this river (famous in our pre-Norman history for the earliest parade * of English monarchy) is wild and picturesque;

* “*Earliest parade*”:—It was a very scenical parade, for somewhere along this reach of the Dee—viz., immediately below St. John’s Priory—Edgar, the first sovereign of all England, was rowed by nine vassal *reguli*.

and even below my mother's Priory wears a character of interest. But, a mile or so nearer to its mouth, when leaving Chester for Parkgate, it becomes miserably tame; and the several reaches of the river take the appearance of formal canals. On the right bank * of the river runs an artificial mound called the Cop. It was, I believe, originally a Danish work; and certainly its name is Danish (*i.e.*, Icelandic, or old Danish), and the same from which is derived our architectural word *coping*. Upon this bank I was walking, and throwing my gaze along the formal vista presented by the river. Some trifle of anxiety might mingle with this gaze at the first, lest perhaps Philistines might be abroad; for it was just possible that I had been watched. But I have generally found that, if you are in quest of some certain escape from Philistines of whatsoever class—sheriff-officers, bores, no matter what—the surest refuge is to be found amongst hedgerows and fields, amongst cows and sheep: in fact, cows are amongst the gentlest of breathing creatures; none show more passionate tenderness to their young, when deprived of them; and, in short, I am not ashamed to profess a deep love for these quiet creatures. On the present occasion, there were many cows grazing in the fields below the Cop: but all along the Cop itself, I could descry no person whatever answering to the idea of a Philistine: in fact, there was nobody at all, except one woman, apparently middle-aged (meaning by *that* from thirty-five to forty-five), neatly dressed, though perhaps in rustic fashion, and by no possibility belonging to any class of my enemies; for already I was near enough to see so much. This woman might be a quarter-of-a-mile distant; and was steadily advancing towards me—face to face. Soon, therefore, I was beginning to read the character of her features pretty distinctly;

* “*Right bank*”:—But which bank *is* right, and which left, under circumstances of position varying by possibility without end? This is a reasonable demur; but yet it argues an inexperienced reader. For always the position of the spectator is conventionally fixed. In military tactics, in philosophic geography, in history, etc., the uniform assumption is, that you are standing with your back to the source of the river, and your eyes travelling along with its current. That bank of the river which under these circumstances lies upon your right, is the right bank *absolutely*, and not *relatively* only (as would be the case if a room, and not a river, were concerned). Hence it follows that the Middlesex side of the Thames is always the left bank, and the Surrey side always the right bank, no matter whether you are moving from London to Oxford, or reversely from Oxford to London.

and her countenance naturally served as a mirror to echo and reverberate my own feelings, consequently my own horror (horror without exaggeration it was), at a sudden uproar of tumultuous sounds rising clamorously ahead. *Ahead* I mean in relation to myself, but to *her* the sound was from the rear. Our situation was briefly this. Nearly half-a-mile behind the station of the woman, that reach of the river along which we two were moving came to an abrupt close ; so that the next reach, making nearly a right-angled turn, lay entirely out of view. From this unseen reach it was that the angry clamour, so passionate and so mysterious, arose : and I, for *my* part, having never heard such a fierce battling outcry, nor even heard of such a cry, either in books or on the stage, in prose or verse, could not so much as whisper a guess to myself upon its probable cause. Only this I felt, that blind, unorganised nature it must be—and nothing in human or in brutal wrath—that could utter itself by such an anarchy of sea-like uproars. What was it ? Where was it ? Whence was it ? Earthquake was it ? convulsion of the steadfast earth ? or was it the breaking loose from ancient chains of some deep morass like that of Solway ? More probable it seemed, that the *ανω ποταμων* of Euripides (the flowing backwards of rivers to their fountains) now, at last, after ages of expectation, had been suddenly realised. Not long I needed to speculate ; for within half-a-minute, perhaps, from the first arrest of our attention, the proximate cause of this mystery declared itself to our eyes, although the remote cause (the hidden cause of that visible cause) was still as dark as before. Round that right-angled turn which I have mentioned as wheeling into the next succeeding reach of the river, suddenly as with the trampling of cavalry—but all dressing accurately—and the water at the outer angle sweeping so much faster than that at the inner angle, as to keep the front of advance rigorously in line, violently careered round into our own placid watery vista a huge charging block of waters, filling the whole channel of the river, and coming down upon us at the rate of forty miles an hour. Well was it for us, myself and that respectable rustic woman, us the Deucalion and Pyrrha of this perilous moment, sole survivors apparently of the deluge (since by accident there was at that particular moment on that particular Cop nothing else to survive), that by means of this Cop, and of ancient Danish hands (possibly not yet paid for their work), we *could* survive. In fact, this watery breastwork, a perpendicular

wall of water carrying itself as true as if controlled by a mason's plumb-line, rode forward at such a pace, that obviously the fleetest horse or dromedary would have had no chance of escape. Many a decent railway even, among railways since born its rivals, would not have had above the third of a chance. Naturally, I had too short a time for observing much or accurately ; and universally I am a poor hand at observing ; else I should say, that this riding block of crystal waters did not gallop, but went at a long trot ; yes, long trot—that most frightful of paces in a tiger, in a buffalo, or in a rebellion of waters. Even a ghost, I feel convinced, would appal me more if coming up at a long diabolical trot, than at a canter or gallop. The first impulse to both of us was derived from cowardice ; cowardice the most abject and selfish. Such is man, though a Deucalion elect ; such is woman, though a decent Pyrrha. Both of us ran like hares ; neither did I, Deucalion, think of poor Pyrrha at all for the first sixty seconds. Yet, on the other hand, why *should* I ? It struck me seriously that St. George's Channel (and if so, beyond a doubt, the Atlantic Ocean) had broke loose, and was, doubtless, playing the same insufferable gambols upon all rivers along a seaboard of six to seven thousand miles ; in which case, as all the race of woman must be doomed, how romantic a speculation it was for me, sole relic of literature, to think specially of one poor Pyrrha, probably very illiterate, whom I had never yet spoken to. That idea pulled me up. *Not spoken to her ?* Then I *would* speak to her ; and the more so, because the sound of the pursuing river told me that flight was useless. And, besides, if any reporter or sub-editor of some Chester chronicle should, at this moment, with his glass be sweeping the Cop, and discover me flying under these unchivalrous circumstances, he might gibbet me to all eternity. Halting, therefore (and really I had not run above eighty or a hundred steps), I waited for my solitary cotenant of the Cop. She was a little blown by running, and could not easily speak ; besides which, at the very moment of her coming up, the preternatural column of waters, running in the very opposite direction to the natural current of the river, came up with us, ran by with the ferocious uproar of a hurricane, sent up the sides of the Cop a salute of waters, as if hypocritically pretending to kiss our feet, but secretly understood by all parties as a vain treachery for pulling us down into the flying deluge ; whilst all along both banks the mighty reflux wash was heard as it rode

along, leaving memorials, by sight and by sound, of its victorious power. But my female associate in this terrific drama, what said she, on coming up with me? Or what said I? For, by accident, it was that spoke first; notwithstanding the fact, notorious and undeniable, that *I had never been introduced to her*. Here, however, be it understood, as a case now solemnly adjudicated and set at rest, that, in the midst of any great natural convulsion—earthquake, suppose, waterspout, tornado, or eruption of Vesuvius—it shall and may be lawful in all time coming (any usage or tradition to the contrary notwithstanding), for two English people to communicate with each other, although, by affidavit made before two justices of the peace, it shall have been proved that no previous introduction had been possible; in all other cases the old statute of non-intercourse holds good. Meantime, the present case, in default of more circumstantial evidence, might be regarded, if not as an earthquake, yet as ranking amongst the first-fruits or blossoms of an earthquake. So I spoke without scruple. All my freezing English reserve gave way under this boiling sense of having been so recently running for life: and then, again, suppose the water column should come back—riding *along with* the current, and no longer riding *against* it—in that case, we and all the county Palatine might soon have to run for our lives. Under such threatenings of common peril, surely the *παρρησία*, or unlimited license of speech, ought spontaneously to proclaim itself without waiting for sanction.

So I asked her the meaning of this horrible tumult in the waters: how did she read the mystery? Her answer was, that though she had never before seen such a thing, yet from her grandmother she had often heard of it; and, if she had run before it, *that* was because *I* ran; and a little, perhaps, because the noise frightened her. What was it, then? I asked. "It was," she said, "*The Bore*; and it was an affection to which only some few rivers here and there were liable; and the Dee was one of these." So ignorant was I, that, until that moment, I had never heard of such a nervous affection in rivers. Subsequently I found that, amongst English rivers, the neighbouring river Severn, a far more important stream, suffered at spring-tides the same kind of hysterics, and, perhaps, some few other rivers in this British island; but amongst Indian rivers, only the Ganges.

At last, when *The Bore* had been discussed to the full ex-

tent of our united ignorance, I went off to the subject of that other curse, far more afflicting than any conceivable bore—viz., the foreign letter in my pocket. *The Bore* had certainly alarmed us for ninety or a hundred seconds, but the letter would poison my every existence, like the bottle-imp, until I could transfer it to some person truly qualified to receive it. Might not my fair friend on the Cop be marked out by Fate as “the coming woman” born to deliver me from this pocket curse? It is true that she displayed a rustic simplicity somewhat resembling that of Audrey in “As you like it.” *Her*, in fact, not at all more than Audrey, had the gods been pleased to make “poetical.” But, for my particular mission, *that* might be amongst her best qualifications. At any rate, I was wearied in spirit under my load of responsibility: personally to liberate myself by visiting the post-office, too surely I felt as the ruin of my enterprise in its very outset. Some agent *must* be employed; and where could one be found promising by looks, words, manners, more trustworthiness than this agent, sent by accident? The case almost explained itself. She readily understood how the resemblance of a name had thrown the letter into my possession; and that the simple remedy was—to restore it to the right owner through the right channel, which channel was the never-enough-to-be-esteemed General Post-office, at that time pitching its tents and bivouacking nightly in Lombard Street, but for this special case legally represented by the Chester head-office: a service of no risk to *her*, for which, on the contrary, all parties would thank her. I, to begin, begged to put *my* thanks into the shape of half-a-crown: but, as some natural doubts arose with respect to her precise station in life (for she might be a farmer’s wife, and not a servant), I thought it advisable to postulate the existence of some youthful daughter: to which mythological person I begged to address my offering, when incarnated in the shape of a doll.

I therefore, Deucalion that was or had been provisionally through a brief interval of panic, took leave of my Pyrrha, sole partner in the perils and anxieties of that astounding Bore, dismissing her—Thessalian Pyrrha—not to any Thessalian vales of Tempe, but—O ye powers of moral anachronism!—to the Chester Post-office; and warning her on no account to be prematurely wheedled out of her secret. Her position, diplomatically speaking, was better (as I made her understand) than that of the post-office: she

having something in her gift—viz., an appointment to forty guineas; whereas in the counter-gift of the proud post-office was nothing; neither for instant fruition nor in far-off reversion. Her, in fact, one might regard as a Pandora, carrying a box with something better than hope at the bottom; for hope too often betrays; but a draft upon Smith, Payne, & Smith, which never betrays, and for a sum which, on the authority of Goldsmith, makes an English clergyman “passing rich” through a whole twelve-month, entitled her to look scornfully upon every second person that she met.

In about two hours the partner of my solitary kingdom upon the Cop re-appeared, with the welcome assurance that Chester had survived the Bore, that all was right, and that anything which ever *had* been looking crooked was now made straight as the path of an arrow. She had given “my love” (so she said) to the post-office; had been thanked by more than either one or two amongst the men of letters who figured in the equipage of that establishment; and had been assured that, long before daylight departed, one large cornucopia of justice and felicity would be emptied out upon the heads of all parties in the drama. I myself, not the least afflicted person on the roll, was already released—suddenly released, and fully—from the iniquitous load of responsibility thrust upon me; the poor emigrant was released from his conflict with fears that were uncertain, and creditors too certain; the post-office was released from the scandal and embarrassment of a gross irregularity, that might eventually have brought the post-master-general down upon their haunches; and the household at the Priory were released from all anxieties, great and small, sound and visionary, on the question of my fancied felony.

In those anxieties, one person there was that never had condescended to participate. This was my eldest sister Mary—just eleven months senior to myself. She was among the gentlest of girls, and yet from the very first she had testified the most incredulous disdain of all who fancied *her* brother capable of any thought so base as that of meditating a wrong to a needy exile. At present, after exchanging a few parting words, and a few final or farewell farewells with my faithful female * agent, further busi-

* Some people are irritated, or even fancy themselves insulted, by overt acts of alliteration, as many people are by puns. On their account let me say, that, although there are here eight separate

ness I had none to detain me in Chester, except what concerned this particular sister. My business with *her* was not to thank her for the resolute justice which she had done me, since as yet I could not know of that service, but simply to see her, to learn the domestic news of the Priory, and, according to the possibilities of the case, to concert with her some plan of regular correspondence. Meantime it happened that a maternal uncle, a military man on the Bengal establishment, who had come to England on a three-years' leave of absence (according to the custom in those days), was at this time a visitor at the Priory. My mother's establishment of servants was usually limited to five persons—all, except one, elderly and torpid. But my uncle, who had brought to England some beautiful Arab and Persian horses, found it necessary to gather about his stables an extra body of men and boys. These were all alert and active; so that, when I reconnoitred the windows of the Priory in the dusk, hoping in some way to attract my sister's attention, I not only failed in that object, seeing no lights in any room which could naturally have been occupied by her, but I also found myself growing into an object of special attention to certain unknown servants, who, having no doubt received instructions to look out for me, easily inferred from my anxious movements that I must be the person "wanted." Uneasy at all the novel appearances of things, I went away, and returned, after an hour's interval, armed with a note to my sister, requesting her to watch for an opportunity of coming out for a few minutes under the shadows of the little ruins in the Priory garden,* where I meantime would be waiting. This note

f's in less than half a sentence, this is to be held as pure accident. In fact, at one time there were nine f's in the original cast of the sentence, until I, in pity of the affronted people, substituted *female agent for female friend*.

* "*The little ruins in the Priory garden*":—St. John's Priory had been part of the monastic foundation attached to the very ancient church of St. John, standing beyond the walls of Chester. Early in the seventeenth century, this Priory, or so much of it as remained, was occupied as a dwelling-house by Sir Robert Cotton the antiquary. And there, according to tradition, he had been visited by Ben Jonson. All that remained of the Priory when used as a domestic residence by Cotton was upon a miniature scale, except only the kitchen—a noble room, with a groined roof of stone, exactly as it had been fitted to the uses of the monastic establishment. The little hall of entrance, the dining-room, and principal bedroom, were in a modest style of elegance, fitted by the scale of accommodation for the abode of a literary bachelor, and pretty nearly as Cotton had left them two centuries before. But the

I gave to a stranger, whose costume showed him to be a groom, begging him to give it to the young lady whose address it bore. He answered, in a respectful tone, that he would do so ; but he could not sincerely have meant it, since (as I soon learned) it was impossible. In fact, not one minute had I waited, when in glided amongst the ruins—not my fair sister, but my bronzed Bengal uncle ! A Bengal tiger would not more have startled me. Now, to a dead certainty, I said, here comes a fatal barrier to the prosecution of my scheme. I was mistaken. Between my mother and my uncle there existed the very deepest affection ; for they regarded each other as sole reliques of a household once living together in memorable harmony. But in many features of character no human beings could stand off from each other in more lively repulsion. And this was seen on the present occasion. My dear excellent mother, from the eternal quiet of her decorous household, looked upon every violent or irregular movement, and therefore upon mine at present, much as she would have done upon the opening of the seventh seal in the Revelations. But my uncle was thoroughly a man of the world,

miniature character of the Priory, which had dwindled by successive abridgments from a royal quarto into a pretty duodecimo, was seen chiefly in the beautiful ruins which adorned the little lawn, across which access was gained to the house through the hall. These ruins amounted at the most to three arches—which, because round and not pointed, were then usually called Saxon, as contradistinguished from Gothic. What might be the exact classification of the architecture I do not know. Certainly the very ancient church of St. John, to which at one time the Priory must have been an appendage, wore a character of harsh and naked simplicity that was repulsive. But the little ruins were really beautiful, and drew continual visits from artists and sketchers through every successive summer. Whether they had any architectural enrichments, I do not remember. But they interested all people—first by their miniature scale, which would have qualified them (if portable) for a direct introduction amongst the “*properties*” and *dramatis personæ* on our London opera boards ; and, secondly, by the exquisite beauty of the shrubs, wild flowers, and ferns, that surmounted the arches with natural coronets of the richest composition. In this condition of attractiveness my mother saw this little Priory, which was then on sale. As a residence, it had the great advantage of standing somewhat aloof from the city of Chester, which, however (like all cathedral cities), was quiet and respectable in the composition of its population. My mother bought it, added a drawing-room, eight or nine bedrooms, dressing-rooms, etc., all on the miniature scale corresponding to the original plan : and thus formed a very pretty residence, with the grace of monastic antiquity hanging over the whole little retreat.

and what told even more powerfully on my behalf in this instance, he was a man of even morbid activity. It was so exquisitely natural in his eyes that any rational person should prefer moving about amongst the breezy mountains of Wales, to a slavish routine of study amongst books grim with dust and masters too probably still more dusty, that he seemed disposed to regard my conduct as an extraordinary act of virtue. On his advice, it was decided that there could be no hope in any contest with my main wishes, and that I should be left to pursue my original purpose of walking amongst the Welsh mountains; provided I chose to do so upon the slender allowance of a guinea a-week. My uncle, whose Indian munificence ran riot upon all occasions, would gladly have had a far larger allowance made to me, and would himself have clandestinely given me anything I asked. But I myself, from general ignorance (in which accomplishment I excelled), judged this to be sufficient; and at this point my mother, hitherto passively acquiescent in my uncle's proposals, interfered with a decisive rigour that in my own heart I could not disapprove. Any larger allowance, most reasonably she urged, what was it but to "make proclamation to my two younger brothers that rebellion bore a premium, and that mutiny was the ready road to ease and comfort?" My conscience smote me at these words: I felt something like an electric shock on this sudden reference, so utterly unexpected, to my brothers; for, to say the truth, I had never once admitted them to my thoughts in forecasting the eventual consequences that might possibly unroll themselves from my own headstrong act. Here now, within three days, rang like a solemn knell, reverberating from the sounding-board within my awakened conscience, one of those many self-reproaches so dimly masked, but not circumstantially prefigured, by the secret thought under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral about its dread Whispering Gallery. In this particular instance, I know that the evil consequences from my own example never did take effect. But at the moment of my mother's sorrowful suggestion, the fear that they *might* take effect thrilled me with remorse. My next brother, a boy of generous and heroic temper, was at a school governed by a brutal and savage master. This brother, I well know, had justifying reasons, ten times weightier than any which I could plead, for copying my precedent. Most probable it was that he would do so; but I learned many years subsequently from himself that in fact he did not.

The man's diabolical malice at last made further toleration impossible. Without thinking of my example, under very different circumstances my brother won his own emancipation in ways suggested by his own views and limited by his own resources: he got afloat upon the wide, wide world of ocean; ran along a perilous seven-years' career of nautical romance; had his name almost blotted out from all memories in England; became of necessity a pirate amongst pirates; was liable to the death of a pirate wherever taken; then suddenly, on a morning of battle, having effected his escape from the bloody flag, he joined the English storming party at Monte Video, fought under the eye of Sir Home Popham, the commodore, and within twenty-four hours after the victory was rated as a midshipman on board the *Diadem* (a 64-gun ship), which bore Sir Home's flag. All this I have more circumstantially narrated elsewhere. I repeat the sum of it here, as showing that his elopement from a brutal tyrant was not due to any misleading of mine. I happen to know this now—but then I could not know it. And if I had so entirely overlooked one such possible result, full of calamity to my youthful brothers, why might I not have overlooked many hundreds beside, equally probable—equally full of peril? That consideration saddened me, and deepened more and more the ominous suggestion—the oracle full of woe—that spoke from those Belshazzar thunderings upon the wall of the Whispering Gallery. In fact, every intricate and untried path in life, where it was from the first a matter of arbitrary choice to enter upon it or avoid it, is effectually a path through a vast Hercynian forest, unexplored and unmapped, where each several turn in your advance leaves you open to new anticipations of what is next to be expected, and consequently open to altered valuations of all that has been already traversed. Even the character of your own absolute experience, past and gone, which (if anything in this world) you might surely answer for as sealed and settled for ever—even this you must submit to hold in suspense, as a thing conditional and contingent upon what is yet to come—liable to have its provisional character affirmed or reversed, according to the new combinations into which it may enter with elements only yet perhaps in the earliest stages of development.

Saddened by these reflections, I was still more saddened by the chilling manner of my mother. If I could presume to descry a fault in my mother, it was—that she turned the

chilling aspects of her high-toned character too exclusively upon those whom, in any degree, she knew or supposed to be promoters of evil. Sometimes her austerity might seem even unjust. But at present the whole artillery of her displeasure seemed to be unmasked, and *justly* unmasked, against a moral aberration, that offered for itself no excuse that was obvious in one moment, that was legible at one glance, that could utter itself in one word. My mother was predisposed to think ill of all causes that required many words: I, predisposed to subtleties of all sorts and degrees, had naturally become acquainted with cases that could not unrobe their apparellings down to that degree of simplicity. If in this world there is one misery having no relief, it is the pressure on the heart from the *Incommunicable*. And if another Sphinx should arise to propose another enigma to man—saying, What burden is that which only is insupportable by human fortitude? I should answer at once—*It is the burden of the Incommunicable*. At this moment, sitting in the same room of the Priory with my mother, knowing how reasonable she was—how patient of explanations—how candid—how open to pity—not the less I sank away in a hopelessness that was immeasurable from all effort at explanation. She and I were contemplating the very same act; but she from one centre, I from another. Certain I was, that if through one half-minute she could realise in one deadly experience the suffering with which I had fought through more than three months, the amount of physical anguish, the desolation of all genial life, she would have uttered a rapturous absolution of that which else must always seem to her a mere explosion of wilful insubordination. “In this brief experience,” she would exclaim, “I read the record of your acquittal; in this fiery torment I acknowledge the gladiatorial resistance.” Such in the case supposed would have been her revised verdict. But this case was exquisitely impossible. Nothing which offered itself to my rhetoric gave any but the feeblest and most childish reflection of my past sufferings. Just so helpless did I feel, disarmed into just the same languishing impotence to face (or make an effort at facing) the difficulty before me, as most of us have felt in the dreams of our childhood when lying down without a struggle before some all-conquering lion. I felt that the situation was one without hope; a solitary word, which I attempted to mould upon my lips, died away into a sigh; and passively I acquiesced in the apparent confession spread

through all the appearances—that in reality I had no palliation to produce.

One alternative, in the offer made to me, was, that I had permission to stay at the Priory. The Priory, or the mountainous region of Wales, was offered freely to my choice. Either of the two offered an attractive abode. The Priory, it may be fancied, was clogged with the liability to fresh and intermitting reproaches. But this was not so. I knew my mother sufficiently to be assured that, once having expressed her sorrowful condemnation of my act, having made it impossible for me to misunderstand her views, she was ready to extend her wonted hospitality to me, and (as regarded all practical matters) her wonted kindness; but not that sort of kindness which could make me forget that I stood under the deepest shadows of her displeasure, or could leave me for a moment free to converse at my ease upon any and every subject. A man that is talking on simple toleration, and, as it were, under permanent protest, cannot feel himself morally at his ease, unless very obtuse and coarse in his sensibilities.

Mine, under any situation approaching to the present, were so far from being obtuse, that they were morbidly and extravagantly acute. I had erred: that I knew, and did not disguise from myself. Indeed, the rapture of anguish with which I had recurred involuntarily to my experience of the Whispering Gallery, and the symbolic meaning which I had given to that experience, manifested indirectly my deep sense of error through the dim misgiving which attended it—that in some mysterious way the sense and the consequences of this error would magnify themselves at every stage of life, in proportion as they were viewed retrospectively from greater and greater distances. I had, besides, through the casual allusion to my brothers, suddenly become painfully aware of another and separate failure in the filial obligations resting on myself. Any mother, who is a widow, has especial claims on the co-operation of her eldest son in all means of giving a beneficial bias to the thoughts and purposes of the younger children: and, if *any* mother, then by a title how special could my own mother invoke such co-operation, who had on *her* part satisfied all the claims made upon her maternal character, by self-sacrifices as varied as privately I knew them to be exemplary. Whilst yet comparatively young, not more than thirty-six, she had sternly refused all countenance, on at least two separate occasions, to distinguished

proposals of marriage, out of pure regard to the memory of my father, and to the interests of his children. Could I fail to read, in such unostentatious exemplifications of maternal goodness, a summons to a corresponding earnestness on my part in lightening, as much as possible, the burden of her responsibilities? Alas! too certainly, as regarded *that* duty, I felt my own failure: one opportunity had been signally lost, and yet, on the other hand, I also felt that more might be pleaded on my behalf than could by possibility be apparent to a neutral bystander. But this, to be pleaded effectually, needed to be said—not by myself, but by a disinterested advocate: and no such advocate was at hand. In blind distress of mind, conscience-stricken and heart-stricken, I stretched out my arms, seeking for my one sole auxiliary; that was my eldest sister Mary; for the younger sister Jane was a mere infant. Blindly and mechanically, I stretched out my arms as if to arrest her attention; and giving utterance to my labouring thoughts, I was beginning to speak, when all at once I became sensible that Mary was not there. I had heard a step behind me, and supposed it hers: since the groom's ready acceptance of my letter to her had pre-occupied me with the belief that I should see her in a few moments. But she was far away, on a mission of anxious, sisterly love. Immediately after my elopement, an express had been sent off to the Priory from Manchester; this express, well mounted, had not spent more than four hours on the road. He must have passed me on my first day's walk; and, within an hour after *his* arrival, came a communication from the post-office, explaining the nature and value of the letter that had been so vexatiously thrust into my hands. Alarm spread through the Priory: for it must be confessed that the coincidence of my elopement with this certified delivery of the letter to myself, gave but too reasonable grounds for connecting the two incidents. I was grateful to dear Mary for resisting such strong plausibilities against me; and yet I could not feel entitled to complain of those who had *not* resisted. The probability seemed that I must have violated the laws to some extent, either by forgery or by fraudulent appropriation. In either case, the most eligible course seemed to be my instant expatriation. France (this being the year of peace) or Holland would offer the best asylum until the affair should be settled; and, as there could be no anxieties in any quarter as to the main thing concerned in the issue—viz., the money—

in any case there was no reason to fear a vindictive pursuit, even on the worst assumption as regarded the offence. An elderly gentleman, long connected with the family, and in many cases an agent for the guardians, at this moment offered his services as counsellor and protector to my sister Mary. Two hours therefore from the arrival of the Manchester express (who, starting about 11 A.M., had reached Chester at 3 P.M.), all the requisite steps having been concerted with one of the Chester banks for getting letters of credit, etc., a carriage-and-four was at the Priory gate, into which stepped my sister Mary, with one female attendant and her friendly escort. And thus, the same day, on which I had made my exit from Mr. Lawson's, saw the chase after me commencing. Sunset saw the pursuers crossing the Mersey, and trotting into Liverpool. Thence to Ormskirk, thirteen miles, and thence to *proud Preston*, about twenty more. Within a trifle, these three stages make fifty miles; and so much did my chasers, that pursued when no man fled, accomplish before sleeping. On the next day, long and long before the time when I, in my humble pedestrian character, reached Chester, my sister's party had reached Ambleside—distant about ninety-two miles from Liverpool, consequently somewhere about a hundred and seven miles from the Priory. This chasing party, with good reason, supposed themselves to be on my traces ever after reaching "*proud Preston*," which is the point of confluence for the Liverpool and Manchester roads northwards. For I myself, having originally planned my route for the English lakes, purposely suffered some indications of that plan to remain behind me, in the hope of thus giving a false direction to any pursuit that might be attempted.

The further course of this chase was disagreeably made known to me about four years later, on attaining my majority, by a "little account" of about £150 against my little patrimonial fortune. Of all the letters from the Priory (which, however, from natural oversight were not thought of until the day after my own arrival at the Priory—i.e., the third day after my sister's departure), not one caught them: which was unfortunate. For the journey to and from the lakes, together with a circuit of more than one hundred and fifty miles amongst the lakes, would at any rate have run up to nearly four hundred miles. But it happened that my pursuers, not having time to sift such intelligence as they received, were misled into an excursus

of full two hundred miles more, by chasing an imaginary "me" to the caves, thence to Bolton Abbey, thence nearly to York. Altogether, the journey amounted to above six hundred miles, all performed with four horses. Now at that time the cost of four horses—which in the cheapest hay and corn seasons was three shillings a-mile, and in dear seasons four—was three and sixpence a-mile; to which it was usual to compute an average addition of one shilling a-mile for gates, postilions, ostlers; so that the total amount, with the natural expenses of the three travellers at the inns, ran up to five shillings a-mile. Consequently, five shillings being the quarter of a pound, six hundred miles cost the quarter of £600. The only item in this long account which consoled me to the amount of a solitary smile for all this money thrown away, was an item in a bill at Patterdale (head of Ulleswater)—

To an echo, first quality	.	.	.	.	£0 10 0
To do., second quality	.	.	.	.	0 5 0

It seems the price of echoes varied, reasonably enough, with the amount of gunpowder consumed. But at Low-wood, on Windermere, half-crown echoes might be had by those base snobs who would put up with a vile Brummagem substitute for "the genuine article."

Trivial, meantime, as regarded any permanent consequences, would have been this casual inroad upon my patrimony. Had I waited until my sister returned home, which I might have been sure could only have been delayed through the imperfectly concerted system of correspondence, all would have prospered. From her I should have received the cordiality and the genial sympathy which I needed; I could have quietly pursued my studies; and my Oxford matriculation would have followed as a matter of course. But, unhappily, having for so long a time been seriously shaken in health, any interruption of my wild open-air system of life instantly threw me back into nervous derangements. Past all doubt it had now become that the *al fresco* life, to which I had looked with so much hopefulness for a sure and rapid restoration to health, was even more potent than I had supposed it. Literally irresistible it seemed in re-organising the system of my languishing powers. Impatient, therefore, under the absence of my sister, and agitated every hour so long as my home wanted its central charm in some household countenance, some σύντροφον ὄμμα, beaming with perfect sympathy, I

resolved to avail myself of those wild mountainous and sylvan attractions which at present lay nearest to me. Those parts, indeed, of Flintshire, or even of Denbighshire, which lay near to Chester, were not in any very eminent sense attractive. The vale of Gressford, for instance, within the Flintshire border, and yet not more than seven miles distant, offered a lovely little seclusion; and to this I had a privileged access; and at first I tried it; but it was a dressed and ornamented pleasure-ground: and two ladies of some distinction, nearly related to each other, and old friends of my mother, were in a manner the ladies paramount within the ring fence of this Arcadian vale. But this did not offer what I wanted. Everything was elegant, polished, quiet, throughout the lawns and groves of this verdant retreat: no rudeness was allowed here; even the little brooks were trained to "behave themselves"; and the two villas of the reigning ladies (Mrs. Warrington and Mrs. Parry) showed the perfection of good taste. For both ladies had cultivated a taste for painting, and I believe some executive power. Here my introductions were rather too favourable; since they forced me into society. From Gressford, however, the character of the scene, considered as a daily residence, very soon repelled me, however otherwise fascinating by the accomplishments of its two possessors. Just two-and-twenty miles from Chester, meantime, lay a far grander scene, the fine vale of Llangollen in the centre of Denbighshire. Here, also, the presiding residents were two ladies, whose romantic retirement from the world at an early age had attracted for many years a general interest to their persons, habits, and opinions. These ladies were Irish—Miss Ponsonby, and Lady Eleanor Butler, a sister of Lord Ormond. I had twice been formally presented to them by persons of a rank to stamp a value upon this introduction. But, naturally, though high-bred courtesy concealed any such open expressions of feeling, they must have felt a very slight interest in myself or my opinions.* I grieve to say that my own

* It is worthy of notice that, when I, in this year 1802, and again in after years, endeavoured to impress them favourably with regard to Wordsworth as a poet (that subject having not been introduced by myself, but by one of the ladies, who happened to have a Cambridge friend intimate with the man, and perhaps with his works), neither of them was disposed to look with any interest or hopefulness upon his pretensions. But, at a period long subsequent to this, when the House of Commons had rung with applause on Sergeant Talfourd's mention of his name, and when all American

feelings were not more ardent towards *them*. Nevertheless, I presented myself at their cottage as often as I passed through Llangollen; and was always courteously received when they happened to be in the country. However, as it was not ladies that I was seeking in Wales, I now pushed on to Carnarvonshire; and for some weeks took a very miniature suite of rooms—viz., one room and a closet—at Bangor.

My landlady had been a lady's-maid, or a nurse, or something of that sort, in the Bishop of Bangor's family; and had but lately married away from that family, or (to use her own expression) had "settled." In a little town like Bangor, barely to have lived in the bishop's family conferred some distinction; and my good landlady had rather more than her share of the pride natural to that glorious advantage. What "my lord" said, and what "my lord" did, how useful he was in Parliament, and how indispensable at Oxford, formed the daily burden of her talk. All this I bore very well; for it cost no great effort to make allowance for the garrulity of an old servant; and luckily nothing in our daily routine of life brought us often into each other's company. Sometimes, however, we met; and of necessity, on such occasions, I must have appeared in her eyes very inadequately impressed with the bishop's importance, and with the grandeur of having lived in a palace; and, perhaps, to punish me for my indifference, or it might, after all, be mere accident, she one day repeated to me a conversation in which I was indirectly a party concerned. She had been to the palace; and, dinner being over, she had been summoned into the dining-room. In giving an account of her household economy, she happened to mention that she had let what she styled somewhat magnificently her "apartments." The good bishop (it seemed) had thence taken occasion to caution her as to her selection of inmates; "for," said he, "you must recollect, Betty, that Bangor is in the high road to the Head" (*the Head* was the common colloquial expression for Holyhead); "so that multitudes of Irish swindlers, running away from their debts into England, and of English

tourists of any distinction flocked annually to Rydal Mount, Wordsworth's own poems bear witness that a great revolution had been worked at Llangollen. I mention this anecdote, because I have good reason to think that a large proportion of the "conversions" in the case of Wordsworth took place under the same influence.

swindlers, running away from their debts to the Isle of Man, are likely to take this place in their route." Such advice was certainly not without reasonable grounds; but rather fitted to be stored up for Mrs. Betty's private meditations, than specially reported to me. What followed was worse:—"O my lord," answered my landlady (according to her own representation of the matter), "I really don't think that this young gentleman is a swindler; because——"—"You don't *think* me a swindler?" said I, interrupting her, in a tumult of indignation; "for the future, I shall spare you the trouble of thinking about it." And without delay I prepared for my departure. Some concessions the good woman seemed disposed to make; but a harsh and contemptuous expression, which I fear that I applied to the learned dignitary himself, roused *her* indignation in turn; and reconciliation then became impossible. I was, indeed, greatly irritated at the bishop's having suggested any grounds of suspicion, however remotely, against a person whom he had never seen; and I thought of letting him know my mind in Greek; which, at the same time that it would furnish some presumption in behalf of my respectability, might also (I hoped) compel the bishop to answer in the same language; and in that case I doubted not to make good my superiority as a versatile wielder of arms, rarely managed with effect, against all the terrors of his lordship's wig.

I was wrong if I said anything in my anger that was disparaging or sceptical as to the bishop's intellectual pretensions, which were not only very sound, but very appropriate to the particular stations which he filled. For the Bishop of Bangor (at that time Dr. Cleaver) was also the head of Brasenose, Oxford—which college was indebted to him for its leadership * at that era in scholarship and dis-

* The rank to which Brasenose had suddenly risen in the estimation of the world was put to the test in the following year. The leading family in the house (the *gens*) of Grenville was, at this time, that of the Marquis of Buckingham, not long after elevated to the ducal rank. The second son of this nobleman—viz., Lord George Grenville (subsequently succeeding to the peerage of Nugent, and known in his literary character only as Lord Nugent)—happened, in this or the following year, to be ripe for college; which means in England, that he was a young man, and not a boy; generally, at the very least, eighteen years old. According to all known precedent, he should have gone to Christ Church. But, on such a question arising, naturally his uncle, Lord Grenville, under whose patronage the Grenville "*Homer*" had been published, and who was reputed an accomplished scholar, assisted at the family council;

cipline. In this academic character I learned afterwards that he might be called almost a reformer: a wise, temperate, and successful reformer; and, as a scholar, I saw many years later that he had received the laudatory notice of Porson. But, on the other hand, the bishop was not altogether without blame in unchaining his local influence, were it only by hint or insinuation, against a defenceless stranger. For so great a man, in so small a town as Bangor, was really as much of an autocrat as a post-captain on the quarterdeck of his own vessel. A "sea-lawyer" in such a case must contrive to pocket his wrongs, until he finds himself and the captain on shore. Yet, after all, my scheme was not altogether so absurd; and the anger, in which perhaps it might begin, all melted away in the fun which would have accompanied its execution. It will strike the reader that my plan of retaliation must have failed by arming against me the official pride of the bishop. Any man, it will be thought, occupying so dignified a place in public life—a lord of Parliament, holder of a prize in the episcopal lottery (for Bangor was worth six thousand a year), a leading Don at Oxford—in short, a splendid pluralist, armed with diocesan thunder and lightning—would never stoop from his Jovian altitude to notice any communication whatever from a boy. But it would make

and by *his* advice, to the astonishment of Oxford, Brasenose was selected in preference to Christ Church; and, I believe, on the one sole ground of deference for the administrative talents (combined with singular erudition) of Dr. Cleaver. This casual precedency, however, of Brasenose, resting (as it did) on a mere *personal* basis, ran down as suddenly as it had run up; and has long since been forgotten. The fact is, that rustic families, at a distance from Oxford, naturally presume some superior dignity in any college that should happen to have a bishop for its ruler; not knowing that, in Oxford and Cambridge, all heads of considerable colleges hold themselves (and *are* held) equals in rank and dignity to the bench of bishops. In Oxford more especially, this doctrine receives a standing illustration; for *there* the dean of the diocese is necessarily and *ex officio* the head of Christ Church, which (by the number and the rank of its population) is beyond all competition the supreme college in the whole university. In that character, therefore (of college head), Mr. Dean is a very much greater man than my lord the bishop. This virtual inferiority in the face of an ostensible superiority was, until the new regulations for somewhat equalising the bishopricks, further reinforced by the poverty of Oxford as an episcopal see. It ought to be added, that to hold the headship of a college in combination with a bishoprick, considering the burdensomeness of irreconcilable functions attached to each of the offices, is a scandalous violation of public duty, such as ought never to have won an hour's toleration.

all the difference in the world that this communication by the supposition was to be in Greek. Mere curiosity in such a case would compel the bishop to read it. And then, shockingly irregular as such a course would be, a fatal temptation would arise to the hazardous experiment of answering it in Greek. It would not be pleasant to shrink from the sort of silent challenge thrown out by such an eccentric form of epistle, when worded in the tone of respect due to the bishop's age and spiritual office. And certainly the degradation would be conspicuously less in replying even to a boy, if armed with that sort of accomplishment. But was not the bishop a learned man, well qualified to answer, whose reading must naturally be greater by a score of times than mine? I had heard so; and I was told also, but long after, that he had written well and learnedly (*but not in Greek*) on the Arundel marbles; even to attempt which, in our days, when the forestalling labours of two centuries have so much narrowed the field open to original sagacity, argues an erudition far from common. But I have already given it as my opinion, that there is no proportion held between a man's general knowledge of Greek, and the special art of writing Greek; that is, using it as a vehicle for ordinary and familiar intercourse. This advantage, not necessarily or usually belonging to the most exquisite Greek scholarship, I myself wielded with a preternatural address for varying the forms of expression, and for bringing the most refractory ideas within the harness of Grecian phraseology. Had the bishop yielded to the temptation of replying, then I figured to myself the inevitable result—the episcopal hulk lying motionless on the water like a huge three-decker, not able to return a gun, whilst I, as a light agile frigate, should have sailed round and round him, and raked him at pleasure, as opportunity offered. He could have had no opening for his erudition (as, for instance, upon the Arundel marbles), without too flagrantly recalling the cosmogony man in the “Vicar of Wakefield,” with his ἀναρχον ἄρα καὶ ἀτελεύταιον τὸ πᾶν. Once falling into the snare of replying at all, his lordship would not be at liberty either to break off the correspondence abruptly, or to continue it without damage to his episcopal pomp. My anger, meantime, sudden and fiery, as under a sense of real injury, had not been malicious; and it was already propitiated beforehand by the mere fun and comic effect of the picture which I thus prefigured as arising between us. In no case could I have found pleasure in causing any mortifi-

fications to the bishop—mortifications which the Methodists (by this time swarming in Carnarvonshire) would exultingly have diffused. In the end I should probalby have confined myself to a grave and temperate remonstrance, simply stating the distressing consequences which were likely to result to me from the too unguarded insinuations of his lordship.

But these consequences travelled fast upon the traces of those insinuations; and already upon the very day when my foolish landlady (more, perhaps, in thoughtlessness than with any purpose of mischief) had repeated the bishop's words in what seemed to me so insulting a tone, and so entirely without provocation (since there never had been the smallest irregularity in our little weekly settlements), one of those consequences was, that I became homeless. For I disdained to profit by the shelter of a house from which truth and courtesy seemed alike banished. And from that one consequence naturally enough flowed others; for, having, at any rate, to seek a new home, I left Bangor* at once, and rambled away to Carnarvon—distant about two-and-a-half hours' smart walking. At Carnarvon I found no lodging that altogether suited my purposes; hired lodgings being then thinly sown in North Wales; and for some time, therefore, having a small reserve of guineas, I lived very much at inns.

This change of abode naturally drew my thoughts away from the bishop. And thus gradually all my thoughts of expostulation faded away. This I am disposed to regard as an unfortunate solution of the affair, which otherwise would probably have taken the following course. The bishop, as I afterwards heard when resident myself at Oxford, and personally acquainted with men of Brasenose (to which college, indeed, subsequently, my own youngest brother belonged), was a reasonable and even amiable man. On receiving, therefore, my Greek remonstrance, he was

* In this, except for what concerned the cheapness and the brilliant cleanliness of the lodgings, under the management of an English housemaid approved by an English bishop's housekeeper, there was little to regret. Bangor, indeed, had few attractions, fewer than any other spot in Carnarvonshire. And yet, was there not the Cathedral? Certainly there was; and that might have been a great resource to me, had there been the regular choir services, but there were none. Indeed, there could be none; for, so far as I ever heard, there was no choir. The Cathedral cemetery was at that time famous as the most beautiful in the whole kingdom. But the beauty was scarcely appropriate: it was the beauty of a well-kept shrubbery, and not of a cemetery. It contrived to look smiling and attractive by the entire dissembling of its real purposes.

sure as a scholar to have taken some interest in the writer ; and he was too equitable to have neglected any statement, Greek or not Greek, which reflected, with some apparent justice, upon his own conduct as not sufficiently considerate. He would, therefore, almost certainly have replied to me in courteous terms ; regretting the accident which had made me houseless ; but reminding me that all communications made to a dependant within a man's own gates, and never meant as grounds of action, but simply as cautions—general and not special—are in law and usage held to be privileged communications, and equally whether written or spoken. The insulting use made of this caution, he would have treated as due simply to the woman's coarseness, but in part, perhaps, as due to a cause which has much to do with the harsh and uncivil expressions of uneducated people—viz., their very limited command of language. They use phrases much stronger than naturally belong to their thoughts and meaning, simply because the narrowness of their vocabulary oftentimes suggests to their embarrassed choice no variation of expression wearing a character less offensive. To such a letter I should have made a suitable reply ; and, henceforward, it is probable that, until the Michaelmas term drew the bishop's family away to Oxford, I should have found my abode in Bangor, or its neighbourhood, much improved as regards the command of books. That advantage would have been fugitive. But other and remoter advantages might have been more serious. It happened that the college, to which the Manchester Grammar School would have consigned me as a privileged *alumnus*, was that very college over which the bishop presided. I have no reason to think that the bishop would have had power to retrieve for me any part of the privileges which by my elopement I had wilfully forfeited : but he would have had it abundantly in his power to place the ordinary college advantages of Fellowships, etc., within my reach : whereas afterwards, going under erroneous counsel to a college disconnected from my own county and my own schools, I never enjoyed those ordinary opportunities of advancement, and consequently of literary leisure, which the English universities open to almost every man who qualifies himself duly to obtain them. All this, however, was thrown into the world of dreams and fable by my hasty movement to Carnarvon, and that region which Pennant first distinguished by the name of Snowdonia.

There were already, even in those days of 1802, numerous inns, erected at reasonable distances from each other, for the accommodation of tourists: and no sort of disgrace attached in Wales, as too generally upon the great roads of England, to the pedestrian style of travelling. Indeed, the majority of those whom I met as fellow-tourists in the quiet little cottage-parlours of the Welsh posting-houses were pedestrian travellers. All the way from Shrewsbury through Llangollen, Llanrwst,* Conway, Bangor, then turning to the left at right angles through Carnarvon, and so on to Dolgelly (the chief town of Merionethshire), Tany-Bwlch, Harlech, Barmouth, and through the sweet solitudes of Cardiganshire, or turning back sharply towards the English border through the gorgeous wood scenery of Montgomeryshire—everywhere at intermitting distances of twelve to sixteen miles, I found the most comfortable inns. One feature indeed of repose in all this chain of solitary resting-houses—viz., the fact that none of them rose above two storeys in height—was due to the modest scale on which the travelling system of the Principality had moulded itself in correspondence to the calls of England, which then (but be it remembered this *then* was in 1802, a year of peace) threw a very small proportion of her vast migratory population annually into this sequestered channel. No huge Babylonian centres of commerce towered into the clouds on these sweet sylvan routes: no hurricanes of haste, or fever-stricken armies of horses and flying chariots, tormented the echoes in these mountain recesses. And it has often struck me that a world-wearied man, who sought for the peace of monasteries separated from their gloomy captivity—peace and silence such as theirs combined with the large liberty of nature—could not do better than revolve amongst these modest inns in the five northern Welsh counties of Denbigh, Montgomery, Carnarvon, Merioneth, and Cardigan. Sleeping, for instance, and breakfasting at Carnarvon; then, by an easy nine-mile walk, going forwards to dinner at Bangor, thence to Aber—nine miles; or to Llanberris; and so on for ever, accomplishing seventy to ninety or one hundred miles in a week. This, upon actual experiment, and for week after week, I found the most delightful of lives. Here was the eternal motion of winds and rivers, or of the Wandering Jew liberated from

* "*Llanrwst*":—This is an alarming word for the eye; one vowel to what the English eye counts as seven consonants: but it is easily pronounced as *Tlanroost*.

the persecution which compelled him to move, and turned his breezy freedom into a killing captivity. Happier life I cannot imagine than this vagrancy, if the weather were but tolerable, through endless successions of changing beauty, and towards evening a courteous welcome in a pretty rustic home—that having all the luxuries of a fine hotel (in particular some luxuries* that are almost sacred to Alpine regions), was at the same time liberated from the inevitable accompaniments of such hotels in great cities or at great travelling stations—viz., the tumult and uproar.

Life on this model was but too delightful ; and to myself especially, that am never thoroughly in health unless when having pedestrian exercise to the extent of fifteen miles at the most, and eight to ten miles at the least. Living thus, a man earned his daily enjoyment. But what did it cost ? About half-a-guinea a-day : whilst my boyish allowance was not a third of this. The flagrant health, health boiling over in fiery rapture, which ran along, side by side, with exercise on this scale, whilst all the while from morning to night I was inhaling mountain air, soon passed into a hateful scourge. Perquisites to servants and a bed would have absorbed the whole of my weekly guinea. My policy therefore was, if the autumnal air were warm enough, to save this expense of a bed and the chambermaid by sleeping amongst ferns or furze upon a hillside ; and perhaps with a cloak of sufficient *weight* as well as compass, or an Arab's burnoose, this would have been no great hardship. But then in the daytime what an oppressive burden to carry ! So perhaps it was as well that I had no cloak at all. I did, however, for some weeks try the plan of carrying a canvas tent manufactured by myself, and not larger than an ordinary umbrella : but to pitch this securely I found difficult ; and on windy nights it became a troublesome companion. As winter drew near, this bivouacking system became too dangerous to attempt. Still one may bivouack decently, barring rain and wind, up to the end of October. And I counted, on the whole, that in a fortnight I spent nine nights abroad. There are, as perhaps the reader knows by experience, no jaguars in Wales—nor pumas—nor anacondas—nor (generally speaking) any Thugs. What I feared most, but perhaps only through

* But a luxury of another class, and quite peculiar to Wales, was in those days (I hope in these) the Welsh harp, in attendance at every inn.

ignorance of zoology, was, lest, whilst my sleeping face was upturned to the stars, some one of the many little Brahminical-looking cows on the Cambrian hills, one or other, might poach her foot into the centre of my face. I do not suppose any fixed hostility of that nature to English faces in Welsh cows: but everywhere I observe in the feminine mind something of beautiful caprice, a floral exuberance of that charming wilfulness which characterises our dear human sisters I fear through all worlds. Against Thugs I had Juvenal's license to be careless in the emptiness of my pockets (*cantabit vacuus * coram latrone viator*). But I fear that Juvenal's license will not always hold water. There are people bent upon cudgelling one who will persist in excusing one's having nothing but a bad shilling in one's purse, without reading in that Juvenalian *vacuitas* any privilege or license of exemption from the general fate of travellers that intrude upon the solitude of robbers.

Dr. Johnson, upon some occasion, which I have forgotten, is represented by his biographers as accounting for an undeserving person's success in these terms: "Why, I suppose that *his* nonsense suited *their* nonsense." Can *that* be the humiliating solution of my own colloquial success at this time in Carnarvonshire inns? Do not suggest such a thought, most courteous reader. No matter: won in whatsoever way, success is success; and even nonsense, if it is to be victorious nonsense—victorious over the fatal habit of yawning in those who listen, and in some cases over the habit of disputing—must involve a deeper art or more effective secret of power than is easily attained. Nonsense, in fact, is a very difficult thing. Not every seventh son of a seventh son (to use Milton's words) is equal to the task of keeping and maintaining a company of decent men in orthodox nonsense for a matter of two hours. Come from what fountain it may, all talk that succeeds to the extent of raising a wish to meet the talker again, must contain *salt*; must be seasoned with some flavouring element pungent enough to neutralise the natural tendencies of all mixed conversation, not vigilantly tended, to lose

* "*Vacuus*":—I am afraid, though many a year has passed since last I read Juvenal, that the true classical sense of *vacuus* is, *careless, clear from all burden of anxiety*, so that *vacuitas* will be the result of immunity from robbery. But suffer me to understand it in the sense of *free from the burden of property*, in which sense *vacuitas* would be the cause of such an immunity.

itself in insipidities and platitudes. Above all things, I shunned, as I would shun a pestilence, Coleridge's capital error, which through life he practised, of keeping the audience in a state of passiveness. Unjust this was to others, but most of all to himself. This eternal stream of talk which never for one instant intermitted and allowed no momentary opportunity of reaction to the persecuted and baited auditor, was absolute ruin to the interests of the talker himself. Always passive—always acted upon, never allowed to react, into what state did the poor afflicted listener—he that played the rôle of listener—collapse? He returned home in the exhausted condition of one that has been drawn up just before death from the bottom of a well occupied by foul gases; and, of course, hours before he had reached that perilous point of depression, he had lost all power of distinguishing, understanding, or connecting. I, for my part, without needing to think of the unamiable arrogance involved in such a habit, simply on principles of deadliest selfishness, should have avoided thus incapacitating my hearer from doing any justice to the rhetoric or the argument with which I might address him.

Some great advantages I had for colloquial purposes, and for engaging the attention of people wiser than myself. Ignorant I was in a degree past all imagination of daily life—even as it exists in England. But, on the other hand, having the advantage of a prodigious memory, and the far greater advantage of a logical instinct for feeling in a moment the secret analogies or parallelisms that connected things else apparently remote, I enjoyed these two peculiar gifts for conversation: first, an inexhaustible fertility of topics, and therefore of resources for illustrating or for varying any subject that chance or purpose suggested; secondly, a prematurely awakened sense of *art* applied to conversation. I had learned the use of vigilance in evading with civility the approach of wearisome discussions, and in impressing, quietly and oftentimes imperceptibly, a new movement upon dialogues that loitered painfully, or see-sawed unprofitably. That it was one function of art to hide and mask itself (*artis est artem celare*), this I well knew. Neither was there much art required. The chief demand was for new facts, or new views, or for views newly-coloured impressing novelty upon old facts. To throw in a little of the mysterious every now and then was useful, even with those that by temperament were

averse to the mysterious; pointed epigrammatic sayings and jests—even somewhat worn—were useful; a seasonable quotation in verse was always effective; and illustrative anecdotes diffused a grace over the whole movement of the dialogue. It would have been coxcombry to practise any elaborate or any conspicuous art: few and simple were any artifices that I ever employed; but, being hidden and seasonable, they were often effective. And the whole result was, that I became exceedingly popular within my narrow circle of friends. This circle was necessarily a fluctuating one, since it was mainly composed of tourists that happened to linger for a few weeks in or near Snowdonia, making their headquarters at Bethgellert or Carnarvon, or at the utmost roaming no farther than the foot of Cader Idris. Amongst these fugitive members of our society, I recollect with especial pleasure Mr. De Haren, an accomplished young German, who held, or *had* held, the commission of lieutenant in our British navy, but now, in an interval of peace, was seeking to extend his knowledge of England, and also of the English language; though in *that*, as regarded the fullest command of it colloquially, he had little, indeed, to learn. From him it was that I obtained my first lessons in German, and my first acquaintance with German literature. Paul Richter I then first heard of, together with Hippel, a humorist admired by Kant, and Hamann, also classed as a humorist, but a nondescript writer, singularly obscure, whom I have never since seen in the hands of any Englishman, except once of Sir William Hamilton. With all these writers Mr. De Haren had the means of making me usefully acquainted in the small portable library which filled one of his trunks. But the most stationary members of this semi-literary circle were Welshmen; two of them lawyers, one a clergyman. This last had been regularly educated at Oxford—as a member of Jesus (the Welsh college)—and was a man of extensive information. The lawyers had not enjoyed the same advantages, but they had read diligently, and were interesting companions. Wales, as is pretty well known, breeds a population somewhat litigious. I do not think the worse of them for *that*. The martial Butlers and the heroic Talbots of the fifteenth century, having no regular opening for their warlike fury in the seventeenth century, took to quarrelling with each other; and no letters are more bitter than those which to this day survive from the hostile correspondence of the

brother * Talbots contemporary with the last days of Shakspeare. One channel being closed against their martial propensities, naturally they opened such others as circumstances made available. This temper, widely spread amongst the lower classes of the Welsh, made it a necessity that the lawyers should itinerate on market-days through all the principal towns in their districts. In those towns continually I met them ; and continually we renewed our literary friendship.

Meantime alternately I sailed upon the high-priced and the low-priced tack. So exceedingly cheap were provisions at that period, when the war taxation of Mr. Pitt was partially intermitting, that it was easy beyond measure upon any three weeks' expenditure, by living with cottagers, to save two guineas out of the three. Mr. De Haren assured me that even in an inn, and not in a poor man's cottage (but an unpretending rustic inn, where the mistress of the house took upon herself the functions of every possible servant in turn—cook, waiter, chambermaid, boots, ostler), he had passed a day or two ; and for what he considered a really elegant dinner, as regarded everything except the table equipage (that being rude and coarse), he had paid only sixpence. This very inn, about ten or twelve miles south of Dolgelly, I myself visited some time later ; and I found Mr. De Haren's account in all points confirmed : the sole drawback upon the comfort of the visitor being, that the fuel was chiefly of green wood, and with a chimney that smoked. I suffered so much under this kind of smoke, which irritates and inflames the eyes more than any other, that on the following day reluctantly I took leave of that obliging pluralist the landlady, and really felt myself blushing on settling the bill, until I bethought me of the green wood, which, upon the whole, seemed to balance the account. I could not then, nor can I now, account for these preposterously low prices ; which same prices, strange to say, ruled (as Wordsworth and his sister often assured me) among the same kind of scenery—*i.e.*, amongst the English lakes—at the very same time. To account for it, as people often do, by alleging the want of markets for agricultural produce, is crazy political economy ; since the remedy for paucity of markets, and consequent failure of competition, is, certainly not to sell

* See especially a book written by Sir Egerton Brydges (I forget the title) on the Peerage in the reign of James I.

at losing rates, but to forbear producing, and consequently not to sell at all.*

So cheap in fact were all provisions, which one had any chance of meeting with in a labouring man's house, that I found it difficult under such a roof to spend sixpence a-day. Tea or coffee there was none: and I did not at that period very much care for either. Milk, with bread (coarse, but more agreeable by much than the insipid *whity-grey* bread of towns), potatoes if one wished, and also a little goat's, or kid's, flesh—these composed the cottager's choice of viands; not luxurious, but palatable enough to a person who took much exercise. And, if one wished, fresh-water fish could be had cheap enough; especially trout of the very finest quality. In these circumstances, I never found it easy to

* Thirteen years later—viz., in the year of Waterloo—happening to walk through the whole Principality from south to north, beginning at Cardiff, and ending at Bangor, I turned aside about twenty-five miles to inquire after the health of my excellent hostess, that determined pluralist and intense antipole of all possible sinecurists. I found her cleaning a pair of boots and spurs, and purposing (I rather think) to enter next upon the elegant office of greasing a horse's heels. In that design, however, she was thwarted for the present by myself and another tourist, who claimed her services in three or four other characters previously. I inquired after the chimney—was it still smoking? She seemed surprised that it had ever been suspected of anything criminal; so, as it was not a season for fires, I said no more. But I saw plenty of green wood, and but a small proportion of peats. I fear, therefore, that this, the state-room of the whole concern, still poisons the peace of the unhappy tourists. One personal indemnification, meantime, I must mention which this little guilty room made to me on that same night for all the tears it had caused me to shed. It happened that there was a public dance held at this inn on this very night. I therefore retired early to my bedroom, having had so long a walk, and not wishing to annoy the company, or the excellent landlady, who had, I daresay, to play the fiddle to the dancers. The noise and uproar were almost insupportable; so that I could not sleep at all. At three o'clock all became silent, the company having departed in a body. Suddenly from the little parlour, separated from my bedroom overhead by the slightest and most pervious of ceilings, arose with the rising dawn the very sweetest of female voices perhaps that ever I had heard, although for many years an *habitué* of the opera. She was a stranger; a visitor from some distance; and (I was told in the morning) a Methodist. What she sang, or at least sang last, were the beautiful verses of Shirley ending—

“Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust.”

This incident caused me to forget and forgive the wicked little chimney.

spend even five shillings (no, not three shillings, unless whortleberries or fish had been bought) in one week. And thus it was easy enough to create funds for my periodical transmigrations back into the character of gentleman-tourist. Even the half of five shillings I could not always find means to spend: for in some families, raised above dependence upon daily wages, when I performed any services in the way of letter-writing, I found it impossible at times to force any money at all upon them. Once, in particular, near the small lake of Tallylyn (so written, I believe, but pronounced Taltlyn), in a sequestered part of Merionethshire, I was entertained for upwards of three days by a family of young people, with an affectionate and fraternal kindness that left an impression upon my heart not yet impaired. The family consisted, at that time, of four sisters and three brothers, all grown up, and remarkable for elegance and delicacy of manners. So much beauty, or so much native good breeding and refinement, I do not remember to have seen before or since in any cottage, except once or twice in Westmoreland and Devonshire. They spoke English; an accomplishment not often met with in so many members of one Welsh family, especially in villages remote from the high road. Here I wrote, on my first introduction, a letter about prize-money for one of the brothers, who had served on board an English man-of-war; and, more privately, two letters to sweethearts for two of the sisters. They were both interesting in appearance; and one of uncommon loveliness. In the midst of their confusion and blushes, whilst dictating, or rather giving me general instructions, it did not require any great penetration to discover that they wished their letters to be as kind as was consistent with proper maidenly reserve. I contrived so to temper my expressions as to reconcile the gratification of both feelings; and they were as much pleased with the way in which I had given expression to their thoughts, as (in their simplicity) they were astonished at my having so readily discovered them. The reception one meets with from the women of a family generally determines the tenor of one's whole entertainment. In this case I had discharged my confidential duties as secretary so much to the general satisfaction, perhaps also amusing them with my conversation, that I was pressed to stay; and pressed with a cordiality which I had little inclination to resist. I slept unavoidably with the brothers, the only unoccupied bed

standing in the chamber of the young women: but in all other points they treated me with a respect not usually paid to purses as light as mine; making it evident that my scholarship and courteous demeanour were considered sufficient arguments of gentle blood. Thus I lived with them for three days, and great part of a fourth; and, from the undiminished kindness which they continued to show me, I believe that I might have stayed with them up to this time, if their power had corresponded with their wishes. On the last morning, however, I perceived upon their countenances, as they sat at breakfast, the approach of some unpleasant communication; and soon after, one of the brothers explained to me, that on the day before my arrival, their parents had gone to an annual meeting of Methodists, held at Carnarvon,* and in the course of that day were expected to return; "and if they should not be so civil as they ought to be," he begged, on the part of all the young people, that I would not take it amiss. The parents returned with churlish faces, and "*Dym Sassenach*" (*no English*) in answer to all my addresses. I saw how matters stood; and so, taking an affectionate leave of my kind and interesting young hosts, I went my way. For, though they spoke warmly to their parents on my behalf, and often excused the manner of the old people, by saying that it was "only their way," yet I easily understood that my talent for writing love-letters would do as little to recommend me with two sexagenarian Welsh Methodists as my Greek Sapphics or Alcaics; and what had been hospitality, when offered with the gracious courtesy of my young friends, would become charity, when connected with the harsh demeanour of their parents.

About this time—just when it was becoming daily more difficult to eke out the weekly funds for high-priced inns by the bivouacking system—as if some overmastering fiend, some instinct of migration, sorrowful but irresistible, were driving me forth to wander like the unhappy Io of the Grecian mythus, some oestrus of hidden persecution that bade me fly when no man pursued; not in false hope—for

* "*At Carnarvon*":—It was on this occasion that I learned how vague are the ideas of *number* in unpractised minds. "What number of people, do you think," said I to an elderly person, "will be assembled this day at Carnarvon?"—"What number?" rejoined the person addressed—"what number? Well, really now, I should reckon—perhaps a matter of four millions." Four millions of *extra* people in little Carnarvon, that could barely find accommodation (I should calculate) for an extra four hundred.

my hopes whispered but a doubtful chance, not in reasonable fear—for all was sweet pastoral quiet and autumnal beauty around me, suddenly I took a fierce resolution to sacrifice my weekly allowance, to slip my anchor, and to throw myself in desperation upon London. Not to make the case more frantic than it really was, let the reader remember what it was that I found grievous in my present position, and upon what possibilities it was that I relied for bettering it. With a more extended knowledge of life than I at that time had, it would not have been so hopeless a speculation for a boy, having my accomplishments, to launch himself on the boundless ocean of London. I possessed attainments that bore a money value. For instance, as a “Reader” to the Press in the field of Greek re-publications I might perhaps have earned a livelihood. But these chances, which I really had, never occurred to me in the light of useful resources ; or, to speak the truth, they were unknown to me : and those, which I chiefly relied on, were most unlikely to prove available. But what, meantime, was it that I complained of in the life that I was at present living ? It was this : the dilemma proposed to my choice was—that if I *would*—positively *would*—have society, I must live at inns. But if I reconciled myself to a quiet stationary abode in some village or hamlet, in that case for me, so transcendently careless about diet, my weekly guinea would have procured all that I wanted : and in some houses the advantage, quite indispensable to my comfort, of a private sitting-room. Yet even here the expense was most needlessly enhanced by the aristocratic luxuriousness of our English system, which presumes it impossible for a gentleman to sleep in his sitting-room. On this footing, however, I might perhaps have commanded clean and comfortable accommodations in some respectable families, to whom my noiseless habits, and my respectful courtesy to women, would have recommended me as a desirable inmate. But the deadly drawback on this scheme was—the utter want of access to books, or (generally speaking) to any intellectual intercourse. I languished all the day through, and all the week through—with nothing whatever, not so much as the county newspaper once in seven days to relieve my mortal ennui.

I have told the reader how inexplicably cheap was the life in poor men’s cottages. But this did not affect the prices at the first-class hotels, where only I had any chance of meeting society. Those, and chiefly on the plea that the

season was so brief, charged London prices. To meet such prices, it would no longer be possible, as winter came on, to raise one-half the funds by passing half the time in a less costly mode. There was an end of any feasible plan for interleaving days of hardships with days of ease and intellectual luxury. Meantime, whilst this perplexity was resounding in one ear, in the other were continually echoing the kind offers of my Welsh friends, especially the two lawyers, to furnish me with any money which I might think necessary for my visit to London. Twelve guineas, at length, I mentioned as probably enough. This they lent me on the spot. And now, all at once, I was—ready for London.

My farewell to the Principality was in the same unassuming character of pedestrian tourist as that in which I had entered it. *Impedimenta* of any kind—that is, the encumbrances of horse or baggage—I had none even to the last. Where I pleased, and *when* I pleased, I could call a halt. My last halt of any duration was at Oswestry; mere accident carried me thither, and accident very naturally in so small a town threw me across the path of the very warmest amongst my Welsh friends, who, as it turned out, resided there. He, by mere coercion of kindness, detained me for several days; for denial he would not take. Being as yet unmarried, he could not vivify the other attractions of his most hospitable abode by the reinforcement of female society. His own, however, coming recommended as it did by the graces of a youthful frankness and a kindling intellect, was all-sufficient for the beguiling of the longest day. This Welsh friend was one of many whom I have crossed in life, chained by early accident or by domestic necessity to the calls of a professional service, whilst all the while his whole nature, wild and refractory, ran headlong into intellectual channels that could not be trained into reconciliation with his hourly duties. His library was already large, and as select as under the ordinary chances of provincial book collection could be reasonably expected. For generally one-half, at the least, of a young man's library in a provincial town may be characterised as a mere dropping or deposition from local accidents, a casual windfall of fruits stripped and strewed by the rough storms of bankruptcy. In many cases, again, such a provincial library will represent simply that part of the heavy baggage which many a family, on removing to some distant quarter, has shrunk from the cost of transporting, books being amongst

the heaviest of household goods. Sometimes also, though more rarely, it happens that an ancient family dying out, having unavoidably left to executors the duty of selling every chattel attached to its ancient habits of life, suddenly with meteoric glare there emerges from its hiding-place of centuries some great jewel of literature, a First Folio of the 1623 Shakspeare, an uncastrated *Decamerone*, or other dazzling *κειμήλιον*. And thus it is that a large provincial library, though naturally and peacefully accumulated, yet sometimes shows mute evidence of convulsions and household tragedies; speaks as if by records of storms and through dim mementoes of half-forgotten shipwrecks. Real shipwrecks present often such incoherent libraries on the floors of the hungry sea. Magnificent is the library that sleeps unvexed by criticism at the bottom of the ocean, Indian or Atlantic, from the mere annual contributions and keepsakes, the never-ending *Forget-me-nots* of mighty English Indiamen. The Halsewell, with its sad parting between the captain and his daughters, the Grosvenor, the Winterton, the Abergavenny, and scores of vessels on the same scale, with populations varying by births, deaths, and marriages, populations large as cities, and rich as gold mines, capable of factions and rebellions, all and each have liberally patronised, by the gift of many *Large-Paper* copies, that vast submarine Bodleian, which stands in far less risk from fire than the insolent Bodleian of the upper world. This private Oswestry library wore something of the same wild tumultuary aspect, fantastic and disordinate, but was not for that reason the less attractive; everything was there that you never expected to meet anywhere, but certainly not to meet in company; so that, what between the library and the mercurial conversation of its proprietor, elated by the rare advantage of fraternal sympathy, I was in danger of finding attractions strong enough to lay me asleep over the proprieties of the case or even to set me a-dreaming over imaginary cases. In fact, I had some excuse for doing so; since I knew very imperfectly the common routine of my friend's life; and from *his* lofty Castilian sense of the obligations imposed by the great goddess Hospitality, I never should have been suffered to guess at the extent in which I was now gradually and unconsciously coming daily into collision with the regular calls upon his time. To ride off, under mask of "business," upon a circuit of a week, would, in *his* eyes, have been *virtually*, as regards the result, meanly and evasively, as

regards the mode, to turn me out of his house. He would sooner have died. But in the meantime an accident, which revealed to me the true state of things, or at least revealed a suspicion of it, all at once armed my sense of delicacy against any further lingering. Suddenly and peremptorily I announced my departure—*that* and the mode of it. For a long time he fought with unaffected zeal against my purpose, as nowise essential to his own free action. But at last, seeing that I was in earnest, he forbore to oppose my plan, contenting himself with guiding and improving its details. My plan had been, to walk over the border into England, as far as Shrewsbury (distant from Oswestry, I think, about eighteen miles), and there to ascend any of the heavy stages which would convey me cheaply to Birmingham—the grand focus to which all the routes of England in its main central area converge. Any such plan moved on the assumption that rain would be falling steadily and heavily—a reasonable assumption at the close of November. But, in the possible event of fair weather lasting over four or five days, what should prevent me from traversing the whole distance on foot? It is true, that the aristocratic scowl of the landlord might be looked for as a customary salutation at the close of each day's journey; but, unless at solitary posting-houses, this criminal fact of having advanced by base pedestrian methods, known only to patriarchs of older days and to modern "*tramps*" (so they are called in solemn acts of Parliament), is easily expiated and cleansed, by distributing your dust, should you fortunately have any to show, amongst the streets that you have invaded as a stranger. Happily the scandal of pedestrianism is in one respect more hopefully situated than that of scrofula or leprosy; it is not in any case written in your face. The man who is guilty of pedestrianism, on entering any town whatever, by the simple artifice of diving into the crowds of those untainted by that guilt, will emerge, for all practical purposes, washed and re-baptised. The landlord, indeed, of any one inn knows that you did not reach *him* on horseback, or in a carriage; but you may have been visiting for weeks at the house of some distinguished citizen, whom it might be dangerous to offend; and you may even be favourably known at some other inn. Else, as a general imputation, undoubtedly pedestrianism, in the estimate of English landlords, carries with it the most awful shadow and shibboleth of the pariah. My Welsh friend knew this, and strongly urged me to take advantage

of the public carriages, both on that motive and others. A journey of a hundred and eighty miles, as a pedestrian, would cost me nine or ten days ; for which extent the mere amount of expenses at inns would more than defray the fare of the dearest carriage. To this there was no sound reply, except that corresponding expenses would arise, at any rate, on these nine or ten days, wherever I might be—in London, or on the road. However, as it seemed ungracious to offer too obstinate a resistance to suggestions prompted so entirely by consideration for my own comfort, I submitted to my friend's plan in all its details ; one being that I should go by the Holyhead Mail, and not by any of the heavy coaches. This stipulation pointed to a novel feature in the machinery of travelling just then emerging. The light coaches charged almost mail prices. But the heavy coaches were at that time beginning to assume a new and dreadful form. Locomotion was so prodigiously on the increase, that, in order to meet its demands, the old form of coach (carrying at most six insides) was exchanging itself, on all great roads, for a long, boat-like vehicle, very much resembling our modern detestable *omnibus*, but without our modern improvements. This carriage was called a "*long coach*," and the passengers, twelve or fourteen insides, sat along the sides ; and, as ventilation was little regarded in those days—the very existence of an atmosphere being usually ignored—it followed that the horrors of Governor Holwell's black cage at Calcutta was every night repeated, in smaller proportions, upon every great English road. It was finally agreed that I should leave Oswestry on foot, simply with a view to the best enjoyment of the lovely weather ; but that, as the mail passed through Oswestry, my friend should secure a place for me the whole way to London, so as to shut out competitors.

The day on which I left Oswestry (convoyed for nearly five miles by my warmhearted friend) was a day of golden sunshine amongst the closing days of November. As truly as Jessica's moonlight ("*Merchant of Venice*"), this golden sunshine might be said to *sleep* upon the woods and the fields ; so awful was the universal silence, so profound the death-like stillness. It was a day belonging to a brief and pathetic season of farewell summer resurrection, which, under one name or other, is known almost everywhere. In North America it is called the "*Indian Summer*." In North Germany and Midland Germany it

is called the "Old Wives' Summer," and more rarely the "Girls' Summer." It is that last brief resurrection of summer in its most brilliant memorials, a resurrection that has no root in the past, nor steady hold upon the future, like the lambent and fitful gleams from an expiring lamp, mimicking what is called the "lightning before death" in sick patients, when close upon their end. There is the feeling of a conflict that has been going on between the lingering powers of summer and the strengthening powers of winter, not unlike that which moves by antagonist forces in some deadly inflammation hurrying forwards through fierce struggles into the final repose of mortification. For a time the equilibrium has been maintained between the hostile forces; but at last the antagonism is overthrown; the victory is accomplished for the powers that fight on the side of death; simultaneously with the conflict, the pain of conflict has departed: and thenceforward the gentle process of collapsing life, no longer fretted by countermovements, slips away with holy peace into the noiseless deeps of the Infinite. So sweet, so ghostly, in its soft, golden smiles silent as a dream, and quiet as the dying trance of a saint, faded through all its stages this departing day, along the whole length of which I bade farewell for many a year to Wales, and farewell to summer. In the very aspect and the sepulchral stillness of the motionless day, as solemnly it wore away through morning, noontide, afternoon, to meet the darkness that was hurrying to swallow up its beauty, I had a fantastic feeling as though I read the very language of resignation when bending before some irresistible agency. And at intervals I heard—in how different a key!—the raving, the everlasting uproar of that dreadful metropolis, which at every step was coming nearer, and beckoning (as it seemed) to myself for purposes as dim, for issues as incalculable, as the path of cannon-shots fired at random and in darkness.

It was not late, but it was at least two hours after night-fall, when I reached Shrewsbury. Was I not liable to the suspicion of pedestrianism? Certainly I was: but, even if my criminality had been more unequivocally attested than it could be under the circumstances, still there is a *locus penitentiæ* in such a case. Surely a man may repent of *any* crime; and therefore of pedestrianism. I might have erred; and a court of *pié poudré* (dusty foot) might have found the evidences of my crime on my shoes. Yet

secretly I might be forming good resolutions to do so no more. Certainly it looked like this, when I announced myself as a passenger "booked" for that night's mail. This character at once installed me as rightfully a guest of the inn, however profligate a life I might have previously led as a pedestrian. Accordingly I was received with special courtesy; and it so happened that I was received with something even like pomp. Four wax-lights carried before me by obedient mutes, these were but ordinary honours, meant (as old experience had instructed me) for the first engineering step towards effecting a lodgment upon the stranger's purse. In fact the wax-lights are used by innkeepers, both abroad and at home, to "try the range of their guns." If the stranger submits quietly, as a good anti-pedestrian ought surely to do, and fires no counter gun by way of protest, then he is recognised at once as passively within range, and amenable to orders. I have always looked upon this fine of five or seven shillings (for wax that you do not absolutely need) as a sort of inaugural *honorarium* entrance-money, what in jails used to be known as *smart* money, proclaiming me to be a man *comme il faut*; and no toll in this world of tolls do I pay so cheerfully. This, meantime, as I have said, was too customary a form to confer much distinction. The wax-lights, to use the magnificent Grecian phrase *ἐπομπέε*, moved pompously before me, as the holy—holy fire, the inextinguishable fire and its golden hearth, moved before Cæsar *semper* Augustus, when he made his official or ceremonial *avatars*. Yet still this moved along the ordinary channels of glorification: it rolled along ancient grooves: I might say, indeed, like one of the twelve Cæsars when dying, *Ut puto, Deus fio* (It's my private opinion that at this very moment I am turning into a god), but still the metamorphosis was not complete. That was accomplished when I stepped into the sumptuous room allotted to me. It was a ball-room* of noble proportions—lighted, if I chose to issue orders, by three gorgeous chandeliers, not basely wrapped up in paper, but sparkling through all their thickets of crystal branches, and flashing back the soft rays of my tall waxen lights. There were, moreover, two orchestras, which money

* "*It was a ball-room*":—The explanation of the case was simply, that the hotel was under some extensive process of purification, adornment, and, I believe, extension: and under the accident of being myself on that particular night the sole visitor of the house, I slipped unavoidably into the honours of a semi-regal reception.

would have filled within thirty minutes. And, upon the whole, one thing only was wanting—viz., a throne—for the completion of my *apotheosis*.

It might be seven P.M. when first I entered upon my kingdom. About three hours later I rose from my chair, and with considerable interest looked out into the night. For nearly two hours I had heard fierce winds arising; and the whole atmosphere had, by this time, become one vast laboratory of hostile movements in all directions. Such a chaos, such a distracting wilderness of dim sights, and of those awful "sounds that live in darkness" (Wordsworth's "Excursion"), never had I consciously witnessed. Rightly, and by a true instinct, had I made my farewell adieus to summer. All through the day, Wales and her grand mountain ranges—Penmaenmawr, Snowdon, Cader Idris—had divided my thoughts with London. But now rose London—sole, dark, infinite—brooding over the whole capacities of my heart. Other object—other thought—I could not admit. Long before midnight, the whole household (with the exception of a solitary waiter) had retired to rest. Two hours, at least, were left to me, after twelve o'clock had struck, for heart-shaking reflections. More than ever I stood upon the brink of a precipice; and the local circumstances around me deepened and intensified these reflections, impressed upon them solemnity and terror, sometimes even horror. It is all but inconceivable to men of unyielding and callous sensibilities, how profoundly others find their reveries modified and overruled by the external characters of the immediate scene around them. Many a suicide that hung dubiously in the balances has been ratified, and carried into summary effect, through the forlorn, soul-revolting aspect of a crazy, dilapidated home. Oftentimes, without extravagance, the whole difference between a mind that spurns life, and the same mind reconciled to life, turns upon the outside features of that particular domestic scenery which hourly besieges the eyes. I, in this Shrewsbury hotel, naturally contemplated a group of objects tending to far different results. And yet in some respects they agreed.

The unusual dimensions of the rooms, especially their towering height, brought up continually and obstinately, through natural links of associated feelings or images, the mighty vision of London waiting for me afar off. An altitude of nineteen or twenty feet showed itself unavoidably upon an exaggerated scale in some of the smaller

side-rooms—meant probably for cards or for refreshments. This single feature of the rooms—their unusual altitude, and the echoing hollowness which had become the exponent of that altitude—this one terrific feature (for terrific it was in the effect), together with crowding and evanescent images of the flying feet that so often had spread gladness through these halls on the wings of youth and hope at seasons when every room rang with music—all this, rising in tumultuous vision, whilst the dead hours of night were stealing along, all around me—household and town—sleeping, and whilst against the windows more and more the storm outside was raving, and to all appearance endlessly growing, threw me into the deadliest condition of nervous emotion under contradictory forces, high over which predominated horror recoiling from that unfathomed abyss in London into which I was now so wilfully precipitating myself. Often I looked out and examined the night. Wild it was beyond all description, and dark as “the inside of a wolf’s throat.” But at intervals, when the wind, shifting continually, swept in such a direction as to clear away the vast curtain of vapour, the stars shone out, though with a light unusually dim and distant. Still, as I turned inwards to the echoing chambers, or outwards to the wild, wild night, I saw London expanding her visionary gates to receive me, like some dreadful mouth of Acheron (*Acherontis avari*). Thou also, Whispering Gallery! once again in those moments of conscious and wilful desolation, didst to my ear utter monitorial sighs. For once again I was preparing to utter an irrevocable word, to enter upon one of those fatally tortuous paths of which the windings can never be unlinked.

Such thoughts, and visions without number corresponding to them, were moving across the *camera obscura* of my fermenting fancy, when suddenly I heard a sound of wheels; which, however, soon died off into some remote quarter. I guessed at the truth—viz., that it was the Holyhead Mail * wheeling off on its primary duty of de-

* The Holyhead Mail, depending in its earliest stages upon winds and waters (though not upon tides), could not realise the same exquisite accuracy as mails that moved exclusively upon land. Sixty miles of watery transit between Dublin and Holyhead were performed with miraculous precision. The packets were intrusted by the General Post-Office to none but post-captains, who had commanded frigates. And the salaries were so high as to make these commands confessedly prizes in nautical life, and objects of keen competition. No evil, therefore, which care, foresight, and

livering its bags at the post-office. In a few minutes it was announced as having changed horses ; and off I was to London.

All the mails in the kingdom, with one solitary exception (that of Liverpool), in those days, were so arranged as to reach London early in the morning. Between the hours of four and six A.M., one after the other, according to their station upon the roll, all the mails from the N[orth]—the E[ast]—the W[est]—the S[outh]—whence, according to some curious etymologists, comes the magical word *NEWS*—drove up successively to the post-office, and rendered up their heart-shaking budgets ; none earlier than four o'clock, none later than six. I am speaking of days when all things moved slowly. The condition of the roads was then such, that, in order to face it, a corresponding build of coaches hyperbolically massive was rendered necessary : the mails were upon principle made so strong as to be the heaviest of all carriages known to the wit or the experience of man ; and from these joint evils of ponderous coaches and roads that were quagmires, it was impossible for even the picked breed of English coach-horses, all bone and blood, to carry forward their huge tonnage at a greater rate than six-and-a-half miles an hour. Consequently, it cost eight-and-twenty massy hours for us, leaving Shrewsbury at two o'clock in the dead of night, to reach the General Post-Office, and faithfully to deposit upon the threshing-floors of Lombard Street, all that weight of love and hatred which Ireland had found herself able to muster through twenty-four hours in the great depôt of Dublin, by way of donation to England.

On reflection, I have done myself some injustice. Not altogether without a plan had I been from the first ; and in coming along I had matured it. My success in such a plan would turn upon my chance of borrowing on personal security. £200, without counting any interest upon it, would subdivide into four sums of £50. Now, what interval was it that divided me from my majority ? Simply an interval of four years. London, I knew or believed, was the dearest of all cities for three items of expenditure :

professional skill could remedy, was suffered to exist. Yet, after all, baffling winds would now and then (especially in three or four weeks *after* the equinox) make it impossible for the very ablest man, under the total defect of steam resources, to keep his time. Six hours, I believe, were allowed by the Post-office for the sixty miles ; but at times this must have proved a very inadequate allowance.

(1) servants' wages ; (2) lodgings ; * (3) dairy produce. In other things, London was often cheaper than most towns. Now, in a London street, having no pretensions beyond those of decent respectability, it has always been possible for the last half-century to obtain two furnished rooms at a weekly cost of half-a-guinea. This sum (or say £25) deducted, would leave me annually about the same sum for my other expenses. Too certainly I knew that this would suffice. If, therefore, I could obtain the £200, my plan was to withdraw from the knowledge of all my connections until I should become *mei juris* by course of law. In such a case, it is true that I must have waived all the advantages, fancied or real, small or great, from residence at a university. But, as in fact I never drew the slightest advantage or emolument from any university, my scheme when realised would have landed me in the same point which finally I attained by its failure. The plan was simple enough, but it rested on the assumption that I could melt the obduracy of money-lenders. On this point I had both hopes and fears. But more irritating than either was the *delay*, which eventually I came to recognise as an essential element in the policy of all money-lenders: in that way only can they raise up such claims on behalf of their law-agents as may be fitted for sustaining their zeal.

I lost no time in opening the business which had brought me to London. By ten A.M., an hour when all men of business are presumed to be at their posts, personally or by proxy, I presented myself at the money-lender's office. My name was already known there : for I had, by letters from Wales, containing very plain and very accurate statements of my position in life and my pecuniary expectations (some of which statements it afterwards appeared that he had personally investigated and verified), endeavoured to win his favourable attention. The money-lender, as it turned out, had one fixed rule of action. He never granted a personal interview to any man ; no, not to the most beloved of his clients. One and all—myself, therefore, among

* Not universally. Glasgow, if you travel from Hammerfest southwards (that is, from the northernmost point of Norway, or Swedish Lapland, traversing all latitudes of Europe to Gibraltar on the west, or Naples on the east), is the one dearest place for lodgings known to man. A decent lodging for a single person, in Edinburgh which could be had readily for half-a-guinea a-week, will in Glasgow cost a guinea. Glasgow, except as to servants, is a dearer abode than London.

the crowd—he referred for information, and for the means of prosecuting any kind of negotiation, to an attorney, who called himself, on most days of the week, by the name of Brunell, but occasionally (might it perhaps be on *red-letter* days ?) by the more common name of Brown. Mr. Brunell-Brown, or Brown-Brunell, had located his hearth (if ever he had possessed one), and his household gods (when they were not in the custody of the sheriff), in Greek Street, Soho. The house was not in itself, supposing that its face had been washed now and then, at all disrespectable. But it wore an unhappy countenance of gloom and unsocial fretfulness, due in reality to the long neglect of painting, cleansing, and in some instances of repairing. There were, however, no fractured panes of glass in the windows ; and the deep silence which invested the house, not only from the absence of all visitors, but also of those common household functionaries, bakers, butchers, beer-carriers, sufficiently accounted for the desolation, by suggesting an excuse not strictly true—viz., that it might be tenantless. The house already had tenants through the day, though of a noiseless order, and was destined soon to increase them. Mr. Brown-Brunell, after reconnoitring me through a narrow side-window (such as is often attached to front-doors in London), admitted me cheerfully, and conducted me, as an honoured guest, to his private *officina diplomatum* at the back of the house. From the expression of his face, but much more from the contradictory and self-counteracting play of his features, you gathered in a moment that he was a man who had much to conceal, and much, perhaps, that he would gladly forget. His eye expressed wariness against surprise, and passed in a moment into irrepressible glances of suspicion and alarm. No smile that ever his face naturally assumed, but was pulled short up by some freezing counteraction, or was chased by some close-following expression of sadness. One feature there was of relenting goodness and nobleness in Mr. Brunell's character, to which it was that subsequently I myself was most profoundly indebted for an asylum that saved my life. He had the deepest, the most liberal, and unaffected love of knowledge, but, above all, of that specific knowledge which we call literature. His own stormy (and no doubt oftentimes disgraceful) career in life, that had entangled him in perpetual feuds with his fellow-men, he ascribed, with bitter imprecations, to the sudden interruption of his studies consequent upon his father's violent death, and to

the necessity which threw him, at a boyish age, upon a professional life in the lower branches of law—threw him, therefore, upon daily temptations, by surrounding him with opportunities for taking advantages not strictly honourable, before he had formed any fixed principles at all. From the very first, Mr. Brunell had entered zealously into such conversation with myself as either gave openings for reviving his own delightful remembrances of classic authors, or brought up sometimes doubts for solution, sometimes perplexities and cases of intricate construction for illustration and disentanglement. Hunger-bitten as the house and the household genius seemed, wearing the legend of *Famine* upon every mantelpiece or “coigne of vantage,” and vehemently protesting, as it must have done through all its echoes, against the introduction of supernumerary mouths, nevertheless there was (and, I suppose, of necessity) a clerk, who bore the name of Pyment, or Pyemont, then first of all, then last of all, made known to me as a possible surname. Mr. Pyment had no *alias*—or not to my knowledge—except, indeed, in the vituperative vocabulary of Mr. Brunell, in which most variegated nomenclature he bore many scores of opprobrious names, having no reference whatever to any real habits of the man, good or bad. At two rooms’ distance, Mr. Brunell always assumed a minute and circumstantial knowledge of what Pyment was doing then, and what he was going to do next. All which Pyment gave himself little trouble to answer, unless it happened (as now and then it did) that he could do so with ludicrous effect. What made the necessity for Pyment was the continual call for “an appearance” to be put in at some of the subordinate courts in Westminster—courts of conscience, sheriff courts, etc. But it happens often that he who is most indispensable, and gets through most work at one hour, becomes a useless burden at another; as the hardest working reaper seems, in the eyes of an ignoramus, on a wet, wintry day, to be a luxurious idler. Of these ups and downs in Pyment’s working life, Mr. Brunell made a most cynical use; making out that Pyment not only did nothing, but also that he created much work for the afflicted Brunell. However, it happened occasionally that the truth vindicated itself, by making a call upon Pyment’s physics—aggressive or defensive—that needed an instant attention. “Pyment, I say; this way, Pyment—you’re wanted, Pyment.” In fact, both were big, hulking men, and had need to be so; for sometimes, whether with good reason or none, clients

at the end of a losing suit, or of a suit nominally gained, but unexpectedly laden with heavy expenses, became refractory, showed fight, and gave Pymont reason for saying that at least on this day he had earned his salary by serving an ejection on a client whom on any other plan it might have been hard to settle with.

But I am anticipating. I go back, therefore, for a few explanatory words, to the day of my arrival in London. How beneficial to me would a little candour have been at that early period ! If (which was the simple truth, known to all parties but myself) I had been told that nothing would be brought to a close in less than six months, even assuming the ultimate adoption of my proposals, I should from the first have dismissed all hopes of this nature, as being unsuited to the practicabilities of my situation. It will be seen further on, that there was a real and sincere intention of advancing the money wanted. But it was then too late. And universally I believe myself entitled to say, that even honourable lawyers will not in a case of this nature move at a faster pace : they will all alike loiter upon varied allegations through six months ; and for this reason, that any shorter period, they fancy, will hardly seem to justify, in the eyes of their client, the sum which they find themselves entitled to charge for their trouble and their preliminary correspondence. How much better for both sides, and more honourable, as more frank and free from disguises, that the client should say, " Raise this sum " (of, suppose, £400) " in three weeks, which can be done, if it can be done in three years, and here is a *bonus* of £100. Delay for two months, and I decline the whole transaction." Treated with that sort of openness, how much bodily suffering of an extreme order, and how much of the sickness from hope deferred, should I have escaped ! Whereas, under the system (pursued with me as with all clients) of continually refreshing my hopes with new delusions, whiling me on with pretended preparation of deeds, and extorting from me, out of every little remittance I received from old family friends casually met in London, as much as possible for the purchase of imaginary stamps, the result was, that I myself was brought to the brink of destruction through pure inanition ; whilst, on the other hand, those concerned in these deceptions gained nothing that might not have been gained honourably and rightfully under a system of plain dealing. As it was, subject to these eternal deceptions, I continued for seven or eight weeks

to live most parsimoniously in lodgings. These lodgings, though barely decent in my eyes, ran away with at the least two-thirds of my remaining guineas. At length, whilst it was yet possible to reserve a solitary half-guinea towards the more urgent interest of finding daily food, I gave up my rooms ; and, stating exactly the circumstances in which I stood, requested permission of Mr. Brunell to make use of his large house as a nightly asylum from the open air. Parliament had not then made it a crime, next door to a felony, for a man to sleep out-of-doors (as some twenty years later was done by our benign legislators); as yet *that* was no crime. By the law I came to know sin ; and looking back to the Cambrian hills from distant years, discovered to my surprise what a parliamentary wretch I had been in elder days, when I slept amongst cows on the open hill-sides. Lawful as yet this was ; but not, therefore, less full of misery. Naturally, then, I was delighted when Mr. Brunell not only most readily assented to my request, but begged of me to come that very night, and turn the house to account as fully as I possibly could. The cheerfulness of such a concession brought with it one drawback. I now regretted that I had not, at a much earlier period, applied for this liberty ; since I might thus have saved a considerable fund of guineas, applicable, of course, to all urgent necessities, but at this particular moment to one of clamorous urgency—viz., the purchase of blankets. O ancient women, daughters of toil and suffering, amongst all the hardships and bitter inheritances of flesh that ye are called upon to face, not one—not even hunger—seems in my eyes comparable to that of nightly cold. To seek a refuge from cold in bed, and then, from the thin, gauzy texture of the miserable, worn-out blankets, “not to sleep a wink,” as Wordsworth records of poor old women in Dorsetshire, where coals, from local causes, were at the very dearest—what a terrific enemy was *that* for poor old grandmothers to face in fight ! How feelingly I learned at this time, as heretofore I had learned on the wild hill-sides in Wales, what an unspeakable blessing is that of warmth ! A more killing curse there does not exist for man or woman, than that bitter combat between the weariness that prompts sleep, and the keen, searching cold that forces you from the first access of sleep to start up horror-stricken, and to seek warmth vainly in renewed exercise, though long since fainting under fatigue. However, even without blankets, it was a fine thing to have an asylum from the open air ; and

to be assured of this asylum as long as I was likely to want it.

Towards nightfall I went down to Greek Street ; and found, on taking possession of my new quarters, that the house already contained one single inmate, a poor, friendless child, apparently ten years old ; but she seemed hunger-bitten ; and sufferings of that sort often make children look older than they are. From this forlorn child I learned that she had slept and lived there alone for some time before I came ; and great joy the poor creature expressed, when she found that I was in future to be her companion through the hours of darkness. The house could hardly be called large—that is, it was not large on each separate storey ; but, having four storeys in all, it was large enough to impress vividly the sense of its echoing loneliness ; and, from the want of furniture, the noise of the rats made a prodigious uproar on the staircase and hall ; so that, amidst the real fleshly ills of cold and hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more from the self-created one of ghosts. Against these enemies I could promise her protection ; human companionship was in itself protection ; but of other and more needful aid I had, alas ! little to offer. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of law-papers for a pillow, but with no other covering than a large horseman's cloak ; afterwards, however, we discovered in a garret an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which added a little to our comfort. The poor child crept close to me for warmth, and security against her ghostly enemies. When I was not more than usually ill, I took her into my arms, so that, in general, she was tolerably warm, and often slept when I could not ; for, during the last two months of my sufferings, I slept much in the daytime, and was apt to fall into transient dozings at all hours. But my sleep distressed me more than my watching ; for, besides the tumultuousness of my dreams (which were only not so awful as those which I shall have hereafter to describe as produced by opium), my sleep was never more than what is called *dog-sleep* ; so that I could hear myself moaning ; and very often I was awakened suddenly by my own voice. About this time, a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, which has since returned upon me, at different periods of my life—viz., a sort of twitching (I knew not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach), which compelled me violently to throw out my

feet for the sake of relieving it. This sensation coming on as soon as I began to sleep, and the effort to relieve it constantly awaking me, at length I slept only from exhaustion; and through increasing weakness (as I said before), I was constantly falling asleep, and constantly awaking. Too generally the very attainment of any deep repose seemed as if mechanically linked to some fatal necessity of self-interruption. It was as though a cup were gradually filled by the sleepy overflow of some natural fountain, the fulness of the cup expressing symbolically the completeness of the rest: but then, in the next stage of the process, it seemed as though the rush and torrent-like babbling of the redundant waters, when running over from every part of the cup, interrupted the slumber which in their earliest stage of silent gathering they had so naturally produced. Such and so regular in its swell and its collapse—in its tardy growth and its violent dispersion—did this endless alternation of stealthy sleep and stormy awaking, travel through stages as natural as the increments of twilight, or the kindlings of the dawn: no rest that was not a prologue to terror; no sweet tremulous pulses of restoration that did not suddenly explode through rolling clamours of fiery disruption. Meantime, the master of the house sometimes came in upon us suddenly, and very early; sometimes not till ten o'clock; sometimes not at all. He was in constant fear of arrest. Improving on the plan of Cromwell, every night he slept in a different quarter of London; and I observed that he never failed to examine, through a private window, the appearance of those who knocked at the door, before he would allow it to be opened. He breakfasted alone; indeed, his tea equipage would hardly have admitted of his hazarding an invitation to a second person, any more than the quantity of esculent *material*, which, for the most part, was little more than a roll, or a few biscuits, purchased on his road from the place where he had slept. Or, if he *had* asked a party, as I once learnedly observed to him, the several members of it must have *stood* in the relation to each other (not *sat* in any relation whatever) of succession, and not of co-existence; in the relation of parts of time, and not of the parts of space. During his breakfast, I generally contrived a reason for lounging in; and, with an air of as much indifference as I could assume, took up such fragments as might chance to remain; sometimes, indeed, none at all remained. In doing this, I committed no robbery, except upon Mr.

Brunell himself, who was thus obliged, now and then, to send out at noon for an extra biscuit ; but he, through channels subsequently explained, was repaid a thousand-fold ; and, as to the poor child, *she* was never admitted into his study (if I may give that name to his chief depository of parchments, law-writings, etc.) ; that room was to her the Blue-beard room of the house, being regularly locked on his departure to dinner, about six o'clock, which usually was his final departure for the day. Whether this child were an illegitimate daughter of Mr. Brunell, or only a servant, I could not ascertain ; she did not herself know ; but certainly she was treated altogether as a menial servant. No sooner did Mr. Brunell make his appearance, than she went below-stairs, brushed his shoes, coat, etc. ; and, except when she was summoned to run upon some errand, she never emerged from the dismal Tartarus of the kitchens to the upper air, until my welcome knock towards nightfall called up her little trembling footsteps to the front door. Of her life during the daytime, however, I knew little but what I gathered from her own account at night ; for, as soon as the hours of business commenced, I saw that my absence would be acceptable ; and, in general, therefore, I went off and sat in the parks or elsewhere until the approach of twilight.

But who, and what, meantime, was the master of the house himself ? Reader, he was one of those anomalous practitioners in lower departments of the law who, on prudential reasons, or from necessity, deny themselves all indulgence in the luxury of too delicate a conscience. In many walks of life, a conscience is a more expensive encumbrance than a wife or a carriage ; and, as people talk of "laying down" their carriages, so I suppose my friend Mr. Brunell had "laid down" his conscience for a time ; meaning, doubtless, to resume it as soon as he could afford it. He was an advertising attorney, who continually notified to the public, through the morning papers, that he undertook to raise loans for approved parties in what would generally be regarded as desperate cases—viz., where there was nothing better than *personal* security to offer. But, as he took good care to ascertain that there were ample funds in reversion to be counted on, or near connections that would not suffer the family name to be dishonoured, and as he insured the borrower's life over a sufficient period, the risk was not great ; and even of this the whole rested upon the actual money-lender, who stood aloof in

the background, and never revealed himself to clients in his proper person, transacting all affairs through his proxies learned in the law—Mr. Brunell or others. The inner economy of such a man's daily life would present a monstrous picture. Even with my limited opportunities for observing what went on, I saw scenes of intrigue and complex chicanery, at which I sometimes smile to this day, and at which I smiled then, in spite of my misery. My situation, however, at that time, gave me little experience, in my own person, of any qualities in Mr. Brunell's character but such as did him honour; and of his whole strange composition I ought to forget everything, but that towards me he was obliging, and, to the extent of his power, generous.

That power was not, indeed, very extensive. However, in common with the rats, I sat rent free; and as Dr. Johnson has recorded that he never but once in his life had as much wall-fruit as he wished, so let me be grateful that, on that single occasion, I had as large a choice of rooms, or even of apartments, in a London mansion—viz., as I am now at liberty to add, at the north-west corner of Greek Street, being the house on that side the street nearest to Soho Square—as I could possibly desire. Except the Bluebeard room, which the poor child believed to be permanently haunted, and which, besides, was locked, all others, from the attics to the cellars, were at our service. "The world was all before us," and we pitched our tent for the night in any spot we might fancy. This house I have described as roomy and respectable. It stands in a conspicuous situation, and in a well-known part of London. Many of my readers will have passed it, I doubt not, within a few hours of reading this. For myself, I never fail to visit it when accident draws me to London. About ten o'clock this very night (August 15, 1821, being my birthday), I turned aside from my evening walk along Oxford Street, in order to take a glance at it. It is now in the occupation of some family, apparently respectable. The windows are no longer coated by a paste, composed of ancient soot and superannuated rain; and the whole exterior no longer wears an aspect of gloom. By the lights in the front drawing-room, I observed a domestic party, assembled, perhaps, at tea, and apparently cheerful and gay—marvellous contrast, in my eyes, to the darkness, cold, silence, and desolation, of that same house nineteen years ago, when its nightly occupants were one famishing scholar and a poor, neglected child. Her, by the by, in after

years, I vainly endeavoured to trace. Apart from her situation, she was not what would be called an interesting child. She was neither pretty, nor quick in understanding, nor remarkably pleasing in manners. But, thank God ! even in those years I needed not the embellishments of elegant accessories to conciliate my affections. Plain human nature, in its humblest and most homely apparel, was enough for me ; and I loved the child because she was my partner in wretchedness. If she is now living, she is probably a mother, with children of her own ; but, as I have said, I could never trace her.

This I regret ; but another person there was, at that time, whom I have since sought to trace, with far deeper earnestness, and with far deeper sorrow at my failure. This person was a young woman, and one of that unhappy class who belong to the outcasts and pariahs of our female population. I feel no shame, nor have any reason to feel it, in avowing that I was then on familiar and friendly terms with many women in that unfortunate condition. Smile not, reader too carelessly facile ! Frown not, reader too unseasonably austere ! Little call was there here either for smiles or frowns. A penniless schoolboy could not be supposed to stand within the range of such temptations ; besides that, according to the ancient Latin proverb, "*sine Cerere et Baccho*," etc. These unhappy women, to me, were simply sisters in calamity ; and sisters amongst whom, in as large measure as amongst any other equal number of persons, commanding more of the world's respect, were to be found humanity, disinterested generosity, courage that would not falter in defence of the helpless, and fidelity that would have scorned to take bribes for betraying. But the truth is, that at no time of my life have I been a person to hold myself polluted by the touch or approach of any creature that wore a human shape. I cannot suppose, I will not believe, that any creatures wearing the form of man or woman are so absolutely rejected and reprobate outcasts, that merely to talk with them inflicts pollution. On the contrary, from my very earliest youth, it has been my pride to converse familiarly, *more Socratico*, with all human beings—man, woman, and child—that chance might fling in my way ; for a philosopher should not see with the eyes of the poor liminary creature calling himself a man of the world, filled with narrow and self-regarding prejudices of birth and education, but should look upon himself as a catholic creature, and as standing in an equal relation to high and low,

to educated and uneducated, to the guilty and the innocent. Being myself, at that time, of necessity a peripatetic, or a walker of the streets, I naturally fell in more frequently with those female peripatetics, who are technically called street-walkers. Some of these women had occasionally taken my part against watchmen who wished to drive me off the steps of houses where I was sitting ; others had protected me against more serious aggressions. But one amongst them—the one on whose account I have at all introduced this subject—yet no ! let me not class thee, O noble-minded Ann —, with that order of women ; let me find, if it be possible, some gentler name to designate the condition of her to whose bounty and compassion—ministering to my necessities when all the world stood aloof from me—I owe it that I am at this time alive. For many weeks I had walked, at nights, with this poor friendless girl up and down Oxford Street, or had rested with her on steps and under the shelter of porticos. She could not be so old as myself : she told me, indeed, that she had not completed her sixteenth year. By such questions as my interest about her prompted, I had gradually drawn forth her simple history. Hers was a case of ordinary occurrence (as I have since had reason to think), and one in which, if London beneficence had better adapted its arrangements to meet it, the power of the law might oftener be interposed to protect and to avenge. But the stream of London charity flows in a channel which, though deep and mighty, is yet noiseless and underground ;—not obvious or readily accessible to poor, houseless wanderers ; and it cannot be denied that the outside air and framework of society in London, as in all vast capitals, is unavoidably harsh, cruel, and repulsive. In any case, however, I saw that part of her injuries might have been redressed ; and I urged her often and earnestly to lay her complaint before a magistrate. Friendless as she was, I assured her that she would meet with immediate attention ; and that English justice, which was no respecter of persons, would speedily and amply avenge her on the brutal ruffian who had plundered her little property. She promised me often that she would ; but she delayed taking the steps I pointed out, from time to time ; for she was timid and dejected to a degree which showed how deeply sorrow had taken hold of her young heart ; and perhaps she thought justly that the most upright judge and the most righteous tribunals could do nothing to repair her heaviest wrongs. Some-

thing, however, would perhaps have been done ; for it had been settled between us, at length (but, unhappily, on the very last time but one that I was ever to see her), that in a day or two I, accompanied by her, should state her case to a magistrate. This little service it was destined, however, that I should never realise. Meantime, that which she rendered to me, and which was greater than I could ever have repaid her, was this. One night, when we were pacing slowly along Oxford Street, and after a day when I had felt unusually ill and faint, I requested her to turn off with me into Soho Square. Thither we went ; and we sat down on the steps of a house, which to this hour I never pass without a pang of grief, and an inner act of homage to the spirit of that unhappy girl, in memory of the noble act which she there performed. Suddenly, as we sat, I grew much worse. I had been leaning my head against her bosom, and all at once I sank from her arms, and fell backwards on the steps. From the sensations I then had, I felt an inner conviction of the liveliest kind, that, without some powerful and reviving stimulus, I should either have died on the spot, or should, at least, have sunk to a point of exhaustion from which all re-ascent, under my friendless circumstances, would soon have become hopeless. Then it was, at this crisis of my fate, that my poor orphan companion, who had herself met with little but injuries in this world, stretched out a saving hand to me. Uttering a cry of terror, but without a moment's delay, she ran off into Oxford Street, and in less time than could be imagined, returned to me with a glass of port-wine and spices, that acted upon my empty stomach (which at that time would have rejected all solid food) with an instantaneous power of restoration ; and for this glass the generous girl, without a murmur, paid out of her own humble purse, at a time, be it remembered, when she had scarcely wherewithal to purchase the bare necessities of life, and when she could have no reason to expect that I should ever be able to reimburse her. O youthful benefactress ! how often in succeeding years, standing in solitary places, and thinking of thee with grief of heart and perfect love—how often have I wished that, as in ancient times the curse of a father was believed to have a supernatural power, and to pursue its object with a fatal necessity of self-fulfilment, even so the benediction of a heart oppressed with gratitude might have a like prerogative ; might have power given it from above to chase, to haunt, to waylay, to pursue thee into the cen-

tral darkness of a London brothel, or (if it were possible) even into the darkness of the grave, there to awaken thee with an authentic message of peace and forgiveness, and of final reconciliation !

Some feelings, though not deeper or more passionate, are more tender than others ; and often when I walk, at this time, in Oxford Street by dreamy lamp-light, and hear those airs played on a common street-organ which years ago solaced me and my dear youthful companion, I shed tears, and muse with myself at the mysterious dispensation which so suddenly and so critically separated us for ever. How it happened, the reader will understand from what remains of this introductory narration.

Soon after the period of the last incident I have recorded, I met in Albemarle Street a gentleman of his late Majesty's household. This gentleman had received hospitalities, on different occasions, from my family ; and he challenged me upon the strength of my family likeness. I did not attempt any disguise, but answered his questions ingenuously ; and, on his pledging his word of honour that he would not betray me to my guardians, I gave him my real address in Greek Street. The next day I received from him a ten-pound bank-note. The letter enclosing it was delivered, with other letters of business, to the attorney ; but, though his look and manner informed me that he suspected its contents, he gave it up to me honourably, and without demur.

This present, from the particular service to which much of it was applied, leads me naturally to speak again of the original purpose which had allured me up to London, and which I had been without intermission prosecuting through Mr. Brunell from the first day of my arrival in London.

In so mighty a world as London, it will surprise my readers that I should not have found some means of staving off the last extremities of penury ; and it will strike them that two resources, at least, must have been open to me—viz., either to seek assistance from the friends of my family, or to turn my youthful accomplishments, such as they were, into some channel of pecuniary emolument. As to the first course, I may observe, generally, that what I dreaded beyond all other evils was the chance of being reclaimed by my guardians ; not doubting that whatever power the law gave them would have been enforced against me to the utmost ; that is, to the extremity of forcibly restoring me to the school which I had quitted ; a restoration

which, as it would, in my eyes, have been a dishonour, even if submitted to voluntarily, could not fail, when extorted from me in contempt and defiance of my own known wishes and earnest resistance, to have proved a humiliation worse to me than death, and which would, indeed, have terminated in death. I was, therefore, shy enough of applying for assistance even in those quarters where I was sure of receiving it, if at any risk of furnishing my guardians with a clue for tracing me. My father's friends, no doubt, had been many, and were scattered all over the kingdom; but, as to London in particular, though a large section of these friends would certainly be found there, yet (as full ten years had passed since his death) I knew very few of them even by name; and never having seen London before—except once, in my fifteenth year, for a few hours—I knew not the address of even those few. To this mode of gaining help, therefore, in part the difficulty, but much more the danger which I have mentioned, habitually indisposed me. In regard to the other mode—that of turning any talents or knowledge that I might possess to a lucrative use—I now feel half inclined to join my reader in wondering that I should have overlooked it. As a corrector of Greek proofs (if in no other way), I might surely have gained enough for my slender wants. Such an office as this I could have discharged with an exemplary and punctual accuracy that would soon have gained me the confidence of my employers. And there was this great preliminary advantage in giving such a direction to my efforts, that the intellectual dignity and elegance associated with all ministerial services about the press would have saved my pride and self-respect from mortification. In an extreme case, such as mine had now become, I should not have absolutely disdained the humble station of “devil.” A subaltern situation in a service inherently honourable is better than a much higher situation in a service pointing to ultimate objects that are mean or ignoble. I am, indeed, not sure that I could adequately have discharged the functions of this office. To the perfection of the diabolic character, I fear that patience is one of the indispensable graces; more, perhaps, than I should be found on trial to possess for dancing attendance upon crotchety authors, superstitiously fastidious in matters of punctuation. But why talk of my qualifications? Qualified or not, where could I obtain such an office? For it must not be forgotten that even a diabolic appointment

requires interest. Towards *that*, I must first of all have an introduction to some respectable publisher; and this I had no means of obtaining. To say the truth, however, it had never once occurred to me to think of literary labours as a source of profit. No mode sufficiently speedy of obtaining money had ever suggested itself, but that of borrowing it on the strength of my future claims and expectations. This mode I sought by every avenue to compass; and amongst other persons I applied to a Jew named D——.*

* At this period (autumn of 1856), when thirty-five years have elapsed since the first publication of these memoirs, reasons of delicacy can no longer claim respect for concealing the Jew's name, or at least the name which he adopted in his dealings with the Gentiles. I say, therefore, without scruple, that the name was Dell: and some years later it was one of the names that came before the House of Commons in connection with something or other (I have long since forgotten *what*) growing out of the parliamentary movement against the Duke of York, in reference to Mrs Clark, etc. Like all the other Jews with whom I have had negotiations, he was frank and honourable in his mode of conducting business. What he promised, he performed; and if his terms were high, as naturally they could not *but* be, to cover his risks, he avowed them from the first.

To this same Mr. Dell, by the way, some eighteen months afterwards, I applied again on the same business; and, dating at that time from a respectable college, I was fortunate enough to win his serious attention to my proposals. My necessities had not arisen from any extravagance or youthful levities (these my habits forbade), but simply from the vindictive malice of my guardian, who, when he found himself no longer able to prevent me from going to the university, had, as a parting token of his regard, refused to sign an order for granting me a shilling beyond the allowance made to me at school—viz., £100 per annum. Upon this sum it was, in my time (*i.e.*, in the first decennium of this century), barely possible to have lived at college; and not possible to a man who, though above the affectation of ostentatious disregard for money, and without any expensive tastes, confided, nevertheless, rather too much in servants, and did not delight in the petty details of minute economy. I soon, therefore, became embarrassed: in a movement of impatience, instead of candidly avowing my condition to my mother, or to some one of the guardians, more than one of whom would have advanced me the £250 wanted (not in his legal character of guardian, but as a private friend), I was so foolish as to engage in a voluminous negotiation with the Jew, and was put in possession of the sum I asked for, on the "regular" terms of paying seventeen and a-half per cent., by way of annuity on all the money furnished; Israel, on his part, graciously resuming no more than about ninety guineas of the said money, on account of an attorney's bill (for what services, to whom rendered, and when—whether at the siege of Jerusalem, or at the building of the Second Temple—I have not yet discovered). How many perches this bill measured I really forget; but I still keep it in a cabinet of natural curiosities.

To this Jew, and to other advertising money-lenders, I had introduced myself, with an account of my expectations ; which account they had little difficulty in ascertaining to be correct. The person there mentioned as the second son of —, was found to have all the claims (or more than all) that I had stated : but one question still remained, which the faces of the Jews pretty significantly suggested—was I that person ? This doubt had never occurred to me as a possible one ; I had rather feared, whenever my Jewish friends scrutinised me keenly, that I might be too well known to be that person, and that some scheme might be passing in their minds for entrapping me and selling me to my guardians. It was strange to me to find my own self, *materialiter* considered (so I expressed it, for I doated on logical accuracy of distinctions), suspected of counterfeiting my own self, *formaliter* considered. However, to satisfy their scruples, I took the only course in my power. Whilst I was in Wales, I had received various letters from young friends ; these I produced, for I carried them constantly in my pocket. Most of these letters were from the Earl of Altamont, who was at that time, and had been for some years back, amongst my confidential friends. These were dated from Eton. I had also some from the Marquis of Sligo, his father ; who, though absorbed in agricultural pursuits, yet having been an Etonian himself, and as good a scholar as a nobleman needs to be, still retained an affection for classical studies and for youthful scholars. He had, accordingly, from the time that I was fifteen, corresponded with me—sometimes upon the great improvements which he had made, or was meditating, in the counties of Mayo and Sligo, since I had been there ; sometimes upon the merits of a Latin poet ; at other times, suggesting subjects on which he fancied that I could write verses myself, or breathe poetic inspiration into the mind of my once familiar companion, his son.

On reading the letters, one of my Jewish friends agreed to furnish two or three hundred pounds on my personal security, provided I could persuade the young earl—who was, by the way, not older than myself—to guarantee the payment on our joint coming of age ; the Jew's final object being, as I now suppose, not the trifling profit he could expect to make by me, but the prospect of establishing a connection with my noble friend, whose great expectations were well known to him. In pursuance of this proposal on the part of the Jew, about eight or nine days after

I had received the £10, I prepared to visit Eton. Nearly three guineas of the money I had given to my money-lending friend in the background; or, more accurately, I had given that sum to Mr. Brunell, *alias* Brown, as representing Mr. Dell, the Jew; and a smaller sum I had given directly to himself, on his own separate account. What he alleged in excuse for thus draining my purse at so critical a moment was, that stamps must be bought, in order that the writings might be prepared whilst I was away from London. I thought in my heart that he was lying, but I did not wish to give him any excuse for charging his own delays upon me. About fifteen shillings I had employed in re-establishing (though in a very humble way) my dress. Of the remainder, I gave one-quarter (something more than a guinea) to Ann, meaning, on my return, to have divided with her whatever might remain. These arrangements made, soon after six o'clock, on a dark winter evening, I set off, accompanied by Ann, towards Piccadilly; for it was my intention to go down as far as the turn to Salt Hill and Slough on the Bath or Bristol Mail. Our course lay through a part of the town which has now totally disappeared, so that I can no longer retrace its ancient boundaries—having been replaced by Regent Street and its adjacencies. *Swallow Street* is all that I remember of the names superseded by this large revolutionary usurpation. Having time enough before us, however, we bore away to the left, until we came into Golden Square; there, near the corner of Sherrard Street, we sat down, not wishing to part in the tumult and blaze of Piccadilly. I had told Ann of my plans some time before, and now I assured her again that she should share in my good fortune, if I met with any, and that I would never forsake her, as soon as I had power to protect her. This I fully intended, as much from inclination as from a sense of duty; for, setting aside gratitude (which in any case must have made me her debtor for life), I loved her as affectionately as if she had been my sister; and at this moment with sevenfold tenderness, from pity at witnessing her extreme dejection. I had apparently most reason for dejection, because I was leaving the saviour of my life, yet I, considering the shock my health had received, was cheerful and full of hope. She, on the contrary, who was parting with one who had had little means of serving her, except by kindness and brotherly treatment, was overcome by sorrow, so that, when I kissed her at our final farewell, she put her arms about my neck,

and wept, without speaking a word. I hoped to return in a week, at furthest, and I agreed with her, that on the fifth night from that, and every night afterwards, she should wait for me, at six o'clock, near the bottom of Great Titchfield Street, which had formerly been our customary haven of rendezvous, to prevent our missing each other in the great Mediterranean of Oxford Street. This, and other measures of precaution, I took; one, only, I forgot. She had either never told me, or (as a matter of no great interest) I had forgotten, her surname. It is a general practice, indeed, with girls of humble rank in her unhappy condition, not (as novel-reading women of higher pretensions) to style themselves *Miss Douglas*, *Miss Montague*, etc., but simply by their Christian names, *Mary*, *Jane*, *Frances*, etc. Her surname, as the surest means of tracing her, I ought now to have inquired; but the truth is, having no reason to think that our meeting again could, in consequence of a short interruption, be more difficult or uncertain than it had been for so many weeks, I scarcely for a moment adverted to it as necessary, or placed it amongst my memoranda against this parting interview; and my final anxieties being spent in comforting her with hopes, and in pressing upon her the necessity of getting some medicine for a violent cough with which she was troubled, I wholly forgot this precaution until it was too late to recall her.

When I reached the Gloucester Coffee-house in Piccadilly, at which, in those days, all the western mails stopped for a few minutes in going out of London, it was already a quarter-of-an-hour past eight o'clock; the Bristol Mail was on the point of going off, and I mounted on the outside. The fine fluent motion * of this mail soon laid me asleep. It is somewhat remarkable, that the first easy or refreshing sleep which I had enjoyed for some months was on the outside of a mail-coach—a bed which, at this day, I find rather an uneasy one. Connected with this sleep was a little incident which served, as hundreds of others did at that time, to convince me how easily a man, who has never been in any great distress, may pass through life without knowing in his own person, and experimentally testing, the possible

* The Bristol Mail was at that time the best appointed in the kingdom—owing that advantage, first of all, to an unusually good road, and this advantage it shared with the Bath Mail (their route being exactly the same for a hundred and five miles); but, secondly, it had the separate advantage of an *extra* sum for expenses subscribed by the Bristol merchants.

goodness of the human heart, or, as unwillingly I add, its possible churlishness. So thick a curtain of *manners* is drawn over the features and expression of men's natures, that, to the ordinary observer, the two extremities, and the infinite field of varieties which lie between them, are all confounded under one neutral disguise. The case was this. For the first four or five miles out of London, I annoyed my fellow-passenger on the roof by occasionally falling against him when the coach gave a lurch; and, indeed, if the road had been less smooth and level than it was, I should have fallen off from weakness. Of this annoyance he complained heavily; as, perhaps, in the same circumstances, most people would. He expressed his complaint, however, more morosely than the occasion seemed to warrant; and if I had parted with him at that moment, I should have thought of him as a surly and almost brutal fellow. Still I was conscious that I had given him some cause for complaint; and therefore I apologised, assuring him that I would do what I could to avoid falling asleep for the future; and, at the same time, in as few words as possible, I explained to him that I was ill, and in a weak state from long suffering, and that I could not afford to take an inside place. The man's manner changed upon hearing this explanation in an instant: and when I next woke for a minute, from the noise and lights of Hounslow (for, in spite of my efforts, I had again fallen asleep within two minutes), I found that he had put his arm round me to protect me from falling off; and for the rest of my journey he behaved to me with the gentleness of a woman. And this was the more kind, as he could not have known that I was not going the whole way to Bath or Bristol. Unfortunately, indeed, I *did* go further than I intended; for so genial and refreshing was my sleep, being in the open air, that, upon the sudden pulling up of the mail (possibly at a post-office), I found that we had reached some place six or seven miles to the west of Salt Hill. Here I alighted; and, during the half-minute that the mail stopped, I was entreated by my friendly companion (who, from the transient glimpse I had of him under the glaring lights of Piccadilly, might be a respectable upper servant) to go to bed without delay. [¶]This, under the feeling that some consideration was due to one who had done me so seasonable a service, I promised, though with no intention of doing so; and, in fact, I immediately moved forward on foot. It must then have been nearly eleven; but so slowly did

I creep along, that I heard a clock in a cottage strike four as I was on the point of turning down the road from Slough to Eton. The air and the sleep had both refreshed me ; but I was weary, nevertheless. I remember a thought (obvious enough, and pointedly expressed by a Roman poet) which gave me some consolation, at that moment, under my poverty. There had been, some weeks before, a murder committed on Hounslow Heath, which at that time was really a heath, entirely unenclosed, and exhibiting a sea-like expanse in all directions, except one. I cannot be mistaken when I say that the name of the murdered person was *Steele*, and that he was the owner of a lavender plantation in that neighbourhood.* Every step of my regress (for I now walked with my face towards London) was bringing me nearer to the heath ; and it naturally occurred to me, that I and the accused murderer, if he were that night abroad, might, at every instant, be unconsciously approaching each other through the darkness ; in which case, said I, supposing myself—instead of being little better than an outcast,

“ Lord of my learning, and no land beside ”—

like my friend Lord Altamont, heir, by general repute, to £30,000 per annum, what a panic should I be under at this moment about my throat ! Indeed, it was not likely that Lord Altamont should ever be in my situation ; but, nevertheless, the spirit of the remark remains true, that vast power and possessions make a man shamefully afraid of dying ; and I am convinced that many of the most intrepid adventurers, who, being poor, enjoy the full use of their natural energies, would, if at the very instant of going

* Two men, Holloway and Haggerty, were long afterwards convicted, upon very questionable evidence, as the perpetrators of this murder. The main testimony against them was that of a Newgate turnkey, who had imperfectly overheard a conversation between the two men. The current impression was that of great dissatisfaction with the evidence ; and this impression was strengthened by the pamphlet of an acute lawyer, exposing the unsoundness and incoherency of the statements relied upon by the court. They were executed, however, in the teeth of all opposition. And as it happened that an enormous wreck of life occurred at the execution (not fewer, I believe, than sixty persons having been trampled under foot by the unusual pressure of some brewers' draymen forcing their way with linked arms to the space below the drop), this tragedy was regarded for many years by a section of the London mob as a providential judgment upon the passive metropolis.

into action news were brought to them that they had unexpectedly succeeded to an estate in England of £50,000 a-year, feel their dislike to bullets furiously sharpened,* and their efforts at self-possession proportionably difficult. So true it is, in the language of a wise man, whose own experience had made him acquainted equally with good and evil fortune, that riches are better fitted

“ To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
 Than tempt her to do aught may merit praise.”
Paradise Regained.

I dally with my subject, because, to myself, the remembrance of these times is profoundly interesting. But my reader shall not have any further cause to complain; for now I hasten to its close. In the road between Slough and Eton I fell asleep; and, just as the morning began to dawn, I was awakened by the voice of a man standing over me, and apparently studying my *physics*, whilst to me—upon so sudden an introduction to him in so suspicious a situation—his *morals* naturally suggested a more interesting subject of inquiry. I know not what he was. He was an ill-looking fellow, but not, therefore, of necessity, an ill-meaning fellow; or, if he were, I suppose he thought that no person sleeping out-of-doors in winter could be worth robbing. In which conclusion, however, as it regarded myself, I have the honour to assure him, supposing him ever to find himself amongst my readers, that he was entirely mistaken. I was not sorry at his disturbance, as it roused me to pass through Eton before people were generally astir. The night had been heavy and misty, but towards the morning it had changed to a slight frost, and the trees were now covered with rime. I slipped through Eton unobserved; washed myself, and as far as possible adjusted my dress, at a little public-house in Windsor; and, about eight o'clock, went down towards the precincts of the college, near which were congregated the houses of the “Dames.” On my road I met some junior boys, of whom I made inquiries. An Etonian is always a gentleman; and, in spite of my shabby habiliments, they answered me

* It will be objected that many men, of the highest rank and wealth, have, notwithstanding, in our own day, as well as throughout our history, been amongst the foremost in courting danger on the field of battle. True; but this is not the case supposed. Long familiarity with power and with wealth has, to them, deadened their effect and attractions.

civilly. My friend Lord Altamont was gone to Jesus College, Cambridge. "Ibi omnis effusus labor!" I had, however, other friends at Eton; but it is not to all who wear that name in prosperity that a man is willing to present himself in distress. On recollecting myself, however, I asked for the Earl of Desert,* to whom (though my acquaintance with him was not so intimate as with some others) I should not have shrunk from presenting myself under any circumstances. He was still at Eton, though, I believe, on the wing for Cambridge. I called, was received kindly, and asked to breakfast.

Lord Desert placed before me a magnificent breakfast. It was really such; but in my eyes it seemed trebly magnificent, from being the first regular meal, the first "good man's table," that I had sat down to for months. Strange to say, I could scarcely eat anything. On the day when I first received my ten-pound bank-note, I had gone to a baker's shop and bought a couple of rolls; this very shop I had some weeks before surveyed with an eagerness of desire which it was humiliating to recollect. I remembered the story (which, however, I now believed to be a falsehood) about Otway; and feared that there might be danger in eating too rapidly. But there was no cause for alarm; my appetite was utterly gone, and I nauseated food of every kind. This effect, from eating what approached to a meal, I continued to feel for weeks. On the present occasion, at Lord Desert's table, I found myself not at all better than usual; and, in the midst of luxuries, appetite I had none. I had, however, unfortunately, at all times a craving for wine: I explained my situation, therefore, to Lord Desert, and gave him a short account of my late sufferings; with which he expressed deep sympathy, and called for wine. This gave me instantancous relief and immoderate pleasure; and on all occasions, when I had an opportunity, I never failed to drink wine. Obvious it is, however, that this indulgence in wine would continue to strengthen my malady, for the tone of my stomach was apparently quite sunk; but, by a better regimen, it might sooner, and, perhaps, effectually, have been restored. I hope that it was not from

* I had known Lord Desert, the eldest son of a very large family, some years earlier, when bearing the title of Lord Castlecuffe. Cuffe was the family name; and I believe that they traced their descent from a person of some historic interest—viz., that Cuffe who was secretary to the unhappy Earl of Essex during his treasonable *émeute* against the government of Queen Elizabeth.

this love of wine that I lingered in the neighbourhood of my Eton friends; I persuaded myself *then*, that it was from reluctance to ask Lord Desert, on whom I was conscious of having no sufficient claims, the particular service in quest of which I had come to Eton. I was, however, unwilling to lose my journey, and—I asked it. Lord Desert, whose good-nature was unbounded, and which, in regard to myself, had been measured rather by his compassion, perhaps, for my condition, and his knowledge of my intimacy with several of his relatives, than by an over-rigorous inquiry into the extent of my own direct claims, faltered, nevertheless, at this request. He acknowledged that he did not like to have any dealings with money-lenders, and feared lest such a transaction might come to the ears of his connections. Moreover, he doubted whether *his* signature, whose expectations were so much more bounded than those of his cousin, would avail with my unchristian friends. Still he did not wish, apparently, to mortify me by a refusal peremptory and absolute; for, after a little consideration, he promised, under certain conditions, which he pointed out, to give his security. Lord Desert was at this time not above eighteen years of age; but I have often doubted, on recollecting, since, the good sense and prudence which on this occasion he mingled with so much urbanity of manner (which in him wore the grace of youthful sincerity), whether any statesman—the oldest and the most accomplished in diplomacy—could have acquitted himself better under the same circumstances.

Re-comforted by this promise, which was not quite equal to the best, but far above the worst that I had anticipated, I returned in a Windsor coach to London three days after I had quitted it. And now I come to the end of my story. The Jews did not approve of Lord Desert's conditions, or so they said; whether they would in the end have acceded to them, and were only seeking time for making further inquiries, I know not; but many delays were made—time passed on—the small fragment of my bank-note had just melted away, and before any conclusion could have been put to the business, I must have relapsed into my former state of wretchedness. Suddenly, at this crisis an opening was made, almost by accident, for reconciliation with my guardians. I quitted London in haste, and returned to the Priory; after some time, I proceeded to Oxford; and it was not until many months had passed away that I had it in my power again to revisit the ground which had be-

come so interesting to me, and to this day remains so, as the chief scene of my youthful sufferings.

Meantime, what had become of Ann ? Where was she ? Whither had she gone ? According to our agreement, I sought her daily, and waited for her every night, so long as I stayed in London, at the corner of Titchfield Street ; and during the last days of my stay in London, I put into activity every means of tracing her that my knowledge of London suggested, and the limited extent of my power made possible. The street where she had lodged I knew, but not the house ; and I remembered, at last, some account which she had given of ill-treatment from her landlord, which made it probable that she had quitted those lodgings before we parted. She had few acquaintances ; most people, besides, thought that the earnestness of my inquiries arose from motives which moved their laughter or their slight regard ; and others, thinking that I was in chase of a girl who had robbed me of some trifles, were naturally and excusably indisposed to give me any clue to her, if, indeed, they had any to give. Finally, as my despairing resource, on the day I left London I put into the hands of the only person who (I was sure) must know Ann by sight, from having been in company with us once or twice, an address to the Priory. All was in vain. To this hour I have never heard a syllable about her. This, amongst such troubles as most men meet with in this life, has been my heaviest affliction. If she lived, doubtless we must have been sometimes in search of each other, at the very same moment, through the mighty labyrinths of London ; perhaps even within a few feet of each other—a barrier no wider, in a London street, often amounting in the end to a separation for eternity ! During some years I hoped that she *did* live ; and I suppose that, in the literal and unrheterical use of the word *myriad*, I must, on my different visits to London, have looked into many myriads of female faces, in the hope of meeting Ann. I should know her again amongst a thousand, and if seen but for a moment. Handsome she was not ; but she had a sweet expression of countenance, and a peculiarly graceful carriage of the head. I sought her, I have said, in hope. So it was for years ; but now I should fear to see her ; and her cough, which grieved me when I parted with her, is now my consolation. Now I wish to see her no longer, but think of her, more gladly, as one long since laid in the grave—in the grave, I would hope, of a Magdalen ; taken away before injuries and cruelty

had blotted out and transfigured her ingenuous nature, or the brutalities of ruffians had completed the ruin they had begun.

* * * * *

So then, Oxford Street, stony-hearted stepmother, thou that listenest to the sighs of orphans, and drinkest the tears of children, at length I was dismissed from thee! The time was come that I no more should pace in anguish thy never-ending terraces; no more should wake and dream in captivity to the pangs of hunger. Successors too many to myself and Ann have, doubtless, since then trodden in our footsteps, inheritors of our calamities. Other orphans than Ann have sighed; tears have been shed by other children; and thou, Oxford Street, hast since those days echoed to the groans of innumerable hearts. For myself, however, the storm which I had out-lived seemed to have been the pledge of a long fair weather; the premature sufferings which I had paid down, to have been accepted as a ransom for many years to come, as a price of long immunity from sorrow; and if again I walked in London, a solitary and contemplative man (as oftentimes I did), I walked for the most part in serenity and peace of mind. And, although it is true that the calamities of my novitiate in London had struck root so deeply in my bodily constitution, that afterwards they shot up and flourished afresh, and grew into a noxious umbrage that has overshadowed and darkened my latter years, yet these second assaults of suffering were met with a fortitude more confirmed, with the resources of a maturer intellect, and with alleviations, how deep! from sympathising affection.

Thus, however, with whatsoever alleviations, years far asunder were bound together by subtle links of suffering derived from a common root. And herein I notice the shortsightedness of human desires—that oftentimes, on moonlight nights, during my first mournful abode in London, my consolation was (if such it could be thought) to gaze from Oxford Street up every avenue in succession which pierces northwards through the heart of Marylebone to the fields and the woods; for *that*, said I, travelling with my eyes up the long vistas which lay part in light and part in shade—*that* is the road to the north, and, there-

fore, to Grasmere" (upon which, though as yet unknown to me, I had a presentiment that I should fix my choice for a residence); "and if I had the wings of a dove, *that* way I would fly for rest." Thus I said, and thus I wished in my blindness; yet, even in that very northern region it was, in that very valley to which my erroneous wishes pointed, that this second birth of my sufferings began, and that they again threatened to besiege the citadel of life and hope. There it was that for years I was persecuted by visions as ugly, and by phantoms as ghastly, as ever haunted the couch of Orestes; and in this unhappier than he—that sleep, which comes to all as a respite and a restoration, and to him especially as a blessed balm for his wounded heart and his haunted brain, visited me as my bitterest scourge. Thus blind was I in my desires. And yet, if a veil interposes between the dim-sightedness of man and his future calamities, the same veil hides from him their alleviations; and a grief which had not been feared, is met by consolations which had not been hoped. I, therefore, who participated, as it were, in the troubles of Orestes (excepting only in his agitated conscience), participated no less in all his supports; my Eumenides, like his, were at my bed-feet, and stared in upon me through the curtains; but, watching by my pillow, or defrauding herself of sleep to bear me company through the heavy watches of the night, sat my Electra; for thou, beloved M——, dear companion of my later years, thou wast my Electra! and neither in nobility of mind nor in long-suffering affection wouldst permit that a Grecian sister should excel an English wife. For thou thoughtest not much to stoop to humble offices of kindness, and to servile ministrations of tenderest affection; to wipe away for years the unwholesome dew upon the forehead, or to refresh the lips when parched and baked with fever; nor even when thy own peaceful slumbers had by long sympathy become infected with the spectacle of my dread contest with phantoms and shadowy enemies, that oftentimes bade me "sleep no more!"—not even then didst thou utter a complaint or any murmur, nor withdraw thy angelic smiles, nor shrink from thy service of love, more than Electra did of old. For she, too, though she was a Grecian woman, and the daughter of the king * of men, yet wept sometimes, and hid her face † in her robe.

* Agamemnon—ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν.

† Ὅμμα θεῆς εἰς πέπλον. The scholar will know that throughout this passage I refer to the early scenes of the Orestes—one of

But these troubles are past, and thou wilt read these records of a period so dolorous to us both as the legend of some hideous dream that can return no more. Meantime I am again in London; and again I pace the terraces of Oxford Street by night; and oftentimes—when I am oppressed by anxieties that demand all my philosophy and the comfort of thy presence to support, and yet remember that I am separated from thee by three hundred miles, and the length of three dreary months—I look up the streets that run northward from Oxford Street, upon moonlight nights, and recollect my youthful ejaculation of anguish; but then, remembering that thou art sitting alone in that same valley, and mistress of that very house to which my heart turned in its blindness nineteen years ago, I think that, though blind indeed, and scattered to the winds of late, the promptings of my heart may yet have had reference to a remoter time, and may be justified if read in another meaning; and if I could allow myself to descend again to the impotent wishes of childhood, I should again say to myself, as I look to the north, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!” and with how just a confidence in thy good and gracious nature might I add the other half of my early ejaculation—“and *that* way I would fly for comfort!”

the most beautiful exhibitions of the domestic affections which even the dramas of Euripides can furnish. To the unlearned reader, it may be necessary to say, that the situation at the opening of the drama is that of a brother attended only by his sister during the demoniacal possession of a suffering conscience (or, in the mythology of the play, haunted by the Furies), under circumstances of immediate danger from enemies, and of desertion or cold regard from nominal friends.

THE PLEASURES OF OPIUM

It is very long since I first took opium ; so long, that if it had been a trifling incident in my life, I might have forgotten its date : but cardinal events are not to be forgotten ; and, from circumstances connected with it, I remember that this inauguration into the use of opium must be referred to the spring or to the autumn of 1804 ; during which seasons I was in London, having come thither for the first time since my entrance at Oxford. And this event arose in the following way : from an early age I had been accustomed to wash my head in cold water at least once a-day ; being suddenly seized with toothache, I attributed it to some relaxation caused by a casual intermission of that practice ; jumped out of bed, plunged my head into a basin of cold water, and with hair thus wetted went to sleep. The next morning, as I need hardly say, I awoke with excruciating rheumatic pains of the head and face, from which I had hardly any respite for about twenty days. On the twenty-first day I think it was, and on a Sunday, that I went out into the streets ; rather to run away, if possible, from my torments, than with any distinct purpose of relief. By accident, I met a college acquaintance, who recommended opium. Opium ! dread agent of unimaginable pleasure and pain ! I had heard of it as I had heard of manna or of ambrosia, but no further. How unmeaning a sound was opium at that time ! what solemn chords does it now strike upon my heart ! what heart-quaking vibrations of sad and happy remembrances ! Reverting for a moment to these, I feel a mystic importance attached to the minutest circumstances connected with the place, and the time, and the man (if man he was), that first laid open to me the paradise of opium-eaters. It was a Sunday afternoon, wet and cheerless ; and a duller spectacle this earth of ours has not to show than a rainy Sunday in London. My road homewards lay through Oxford Street ; and near “ the *stately* * Pantheon ”

* “ *Stately* ” :—It is but fair to say that Wordsworth meant to

(as Mr. Wordsworth has obligingly called it) I saw a druggist's shop. The druggist (unconscious minister of celestial pleasures !), as if in sympathy with the rainy Sunday, looked dull and stupid, just as any mortal druggist might be expected to look on a rainy London Sunday ; and when I asked for the tincture of opium, he gave it to me as any other man might do ; and, furthermore, out of my shilling returned to me what seemed to be real copper halfpence, taken out of a real wooden drawer. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding all such indications of humanity, he has ever since figured in my mind as a beatific vision of an immortal druggist, sent down to earth on a special mission to myself. And it confirms me in this way of considering him, that when I next came up to London, I sought him near the stately Pantheon, and found him not ; and thus to me, who knew not his name (if, indeed, he had one), he seemed rather to have vanished from Oxford Street, than to have flitted into any other locality, or (which some abominable man suggested) to have absconded from the rent. The reader may choose to think of him as, possibly, no more than a sublunary druggist ; it may be so, but my faith is better. I believe him to have evanesced.* So unwillingly would I connect any mortal remembrances with that hour, and place, and creature that first brought me acquainted with the celestial drug.

Arrived at my lodgings, it may be supposed that I lost not a moment in taking the quantity prescribed. I was necessarily ignorant of the whole art and mystery of opium-taking ; and what I took, I took under every disadvantage. But I took it ; and in an hour, O heavens ! what a revolution ! what a resurrection, from its lowest depths, of the inner spirit ! what an apocalypse of the world within me ! That my pains had vanished, was now a trifle in my eyes ; this negative effect was swallowed up in the immensity of

speaking of the *interior*, which could very little be inferred from the mean, undistinguished outside, as seen presenting itself endways in Oxford Street.

* "*Evanesced*" :—This way of going off from the stage of life appears to have been well known in the seventeenth century, but at that time to have been considered a peculiar privilege of royalty, and by no means open to the use of druggists. For, about the year 1686, a poet of rather ominous name (and who, apparently, did justice to his name)—viz., Mr. FLATMAN—in speaking of the death of Charles II., expresses his surprise that any prince should commit so vulgar an act as dying ; because, says he,

"Kings should disdain to die, and only *disappear*."

those positive effects which had opened before me, in the abyss of divine enjoyment thus suddenly revealed. Here was a panacea, a *φάρμακον νηπενθες*, for all human woes ; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered ; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waist-coat-pocket ; portable ecstasies might be corked up in a pint-bottle ; and peace of mind could be sent down by the mail.

And, first, one word with respect to its bodily effects ; for upon all that has been hitherto written on the subject of opium, whether by travellers in Turkey (who may plead their privilege of lying as an old immemorial right), or by professors of medicine, writing *ex cathedra*, I have but one emphatic criticism to pronounce—Nonsense ! I remember once, in passing a book-stall, to have caught these words from a page of some satiric author—"By this time I became convinced that the London newspapers spoke truth at least twice a-week—viz., on Tuesday and Saturday *—and might safely be depended upon for—the list of bankrupts." In like manner, I do by no means deny that some truths have been delivered to the world in regard to opium : thus, it has been repeatedly affirmed by the learned that opium is a tawny brown in colour—and this, take notice, I grant ; secondly, that it is rather dear, which also I grant—for, in my time, East India opium has been three guineas a-pound, and Turkey eight ; and, thirdly, that if you eat a good deal of it, most probably you must do what is disagreeable to any man of regular habits—viz., die.† These weighty propositions are, all and singular, true ; I cannot gainsay them ; and truth ever was, and will be, commendable. But, in these three theorems, I believe we have exhausted the stock of knowledge as yet accumulated by man on the subject of opium. And therefore, worthy doctors, as there

* "*Tuesday and Saturday*" :—viz., the two days on which the "Gazette" is (or used to be) published.

† Of this, however, the learned appear latterly to have doubted ; for, in a pirated edition of Buchan's "*Domestic Medicine*," which I once saw in the hands of a farmer's wife, who was studying it for the benefit of her health, the doctor was made to caution his readers against taking more than "twenty-five ounces" of laudanum at one dose. The true reading had doubtless been twenty-five *drops* or minims, which in a gross equation is held equivalent to one grain of average opium ; but opium itself—crude opium—varies enormously in purity and strength ; consequently the tincture prepared from it. And most of the medical connoisseurs whom I have known boiled their opium, so as to cleanse it from gross impurities.

seems to be room for further discoveries, stand aside, and allow me to come forward and lecture on this matter.

First, then, it is not so much affirmed, as taken for granted, by all who ever mention opium, formally or incidentally, that it does or can produce intoxication. Now, reader, assure yourself, *meo periculo*, that no quantity of opium ever did, or could, intoxicate. As to the tincture of opium (commonly called laudanum), *that* might certainly intoxicate, if a man could bear to take enough of it ; but why ? Because it contains so much proof spirits of wine, and not because it contains so much opium. But crude opium, I affirm peremptorily, is incapable of producing any state of body at all resembling that which is produced by alcohol ; and not in *degree* only incapable, but even in *kind* ; it is not in the quantity of its effects merely, but in the quality, that it differs altogether. The pleasure given by wine is always rapidly mounting, and tending to a crisis, after which as rapidly it declines ; that from opium, when once generated, is stationary for eight or ten hours : the first, to borrow a technical distinction from medicine, is a case of acute, the second of chronic, pleasure ; the one is a flickering flame, the other a steady and equable glow. But the main distinction lies in this—that, whereas wine disorders the mental faculties, opium, on the contrary (if taken in a proper manner), introduces amongst them the most exquisite order, legislation, and harmony. Wine robs a man of his self-possession ; opium sustains and reinforces it. Wine unsettles the judgment, and gives a preternatural brightness and a vivid exaltation to the contempts and the admirations, to the loves and the hatreds, of the drinker ; opium, on the contrary, communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties, active or passive ; and, with respect to the temper and moral feelings in general, it gives simply that sort of vital warmth which is approved by the judgment, and which would probably always accompany a bodily constitution of primeval or antediluvian health. Thus, for instance, opium, like wine, gives an expansion to the heart and the benevolent affections ; but, then, with this remarkable difference, that, in the sudden development of kindheartedness which accompanies inebriation, there is always more or less of a maudlin and a transitory character, which exposes it to the contempt of the bystander. Men shake hands, swear eternal friendship, and shed tears—no mortal knows why ; and the animal nature is clearly uppermost. But the expansion of the benigner feelings

Incident to opium is no febrile access, no fugitive paroxysm ; it is a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation from pain that had disturbed and quarrelled with the impulses of a heart originally just and good. True it is, that even wine up to a certain point, and with certain men, rather tends to exalt and to steady the intellect ; I myself, who have never been a great wine-drinker, used to find that half-a-dozen glasses of wine advantageously affected the faculties, brightened and intensified the consciousness, and gave to the mind a feeling of being "*ponderibus librata suis*" ; and certainly it is most absurdly said, in popular language, of any man, that he is *disguised* in liquor ; for, on the contrary, most men are disguised by sobriety, and exceedingly disguised ; and it is when they are drinking that men display themselves in their true complexion of character ; which surely is not disguising themselves. But still, wine constantly leads a man to the brink of absurdity and extravagance ; and, beyond a certain point, it is sure to volatilise and to disperse the intellectual energies ; whereas opium always seems to compose what had been agitated, and to concentrate what had been distracted. In short, to sum up all in one word, a man who is inebriated, or tending to inebriation, is, and feels that he is, in a condition which calls up into supremacy the merely human, too often the brutal, part of his nature ; but the opium-eater (I speak of him simply *as such*, and assume that he is in a normal state of health) feels that the diviner part of his nature is paramount—that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity ; and high over all the great light of the majestic intellect.

This is the doctrine of the true church on the subject of opium : of which church I acknowledge myself to be the Pope (consequently infallible), and self-appointed *legate à latere* to all degrees of latitude and longitude. But then it is to be recollected that I speak from the ground of a large and profound personal experience, whereas most of the unscientific* authors who have at all treated of opium, and even of those who have written professionally on the *materia medica*, make it evident, by the horror they express

* Amongst the great herd of travellers, etc., who show sufficiently by their thoughtfulness that they never held any intercourse with opium, I must caution my readers specially against the brilliant author of "*Anastasius*." This gentleman, whose wit would lead one to presume him an opium-eater, has made it impossible to consider him in that character, from the grievous misrepresentation which he has given of its effects, at pages 215-217 of Vol. I. Upon

of it, that their experimental knowledge of its action is none at all. I will, however, candidly acknowledge that I have met with one person who bore evidence to its intoxicating power, such as staggered my own incredulity; for he was a surgeon, and had himself taken opium largely for a most miserable affection (past all hope of cure), seated in one particular organ. This affection was a subtle inflammation, not acute, but chronic; and with this he fought for more (I believe) than twenty years; fought victoriously, if victory it were, to make life supportable for himself, and during all that time to maintain in respectability a wife and a family of children altogether dependent on him.* I happened to say to him, that his enemies (as I had heard) charged him with talking nonsense on politics, and that his

consideration, it must appear such to the author himself; for, waiving the errors I have insisted on in the text, which (and others) are adopted in the fullest manner, he will himself admit that an old gentleman, "with a snow-white beard," who eats "ample doses of opium," and is yet able to deliver what is meant and received as very weighty counsel on the bad effects of that practice, is but an indifferent evidence that opium either kills people prematurely, or sends them into a madhouse. But, for my part, I see into this old gentleman and his motives: the fact is, he was enamoured of "the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug," which Anastasius carried about him; and no way of obtaining it so safe and so feasible occurred, as that of frightening its owner out of his wits. This commentary throws a new light upon the case, and greatly improves it as a story; for the old gentleman's speech, as a lecture on pharmacy, is absurd; but, considered as a hoax on Anastasius, it reads excellently.

* This surgeon it was who first made me aware of the dangerous variability in opium as to strength under the shifting proportions of its combination with alien impurities. Naturally, as a man professionally alive to the danger of creating any artificial need of opium beyond what the anguish of his malady at any rate demanded, trembling every hour on behalf of his poor children, lest, by any indiscretion of his own, he should precipitate the crisis of his disorder, he saw the necessity of reducing the daily dose to a *minimum*. But to do this he must first obtain the means of measuring the quantities of opium; not the apparent quantities as determined by weighing, but the *virtual* quantities after allowing for the alloy or varying amounts of impurity. This, however, was a visionary problem. To allow for it was simply impossible. The problem, therefore, changed its character. Not to measure the impurities was the object; for, whilst entangled with the operative and efficient parts of the opium, they could not be measured. To separate and eliminate the impure (or inert) parts, this was now the object. And this was effected finally by a particular mode of boiling the opium. That done, the residuum became equable in strength; and the daily doses could be nicely adjusted. About 18 grains formed his daily ration for many years. This, upon the common hospital equation, expresses 18 times 25 drops of laudanum.

friends apologised for him, by suggesting that he was constantly in a state of intoxication from opium. Now, the accusation, said I, is not *primâ facie* an absurd one ; but the defence is. To my surprise, however, he insisted that both his enemies and his friends were in the right. " I will maintain," said he, " that I *do* talk nonsense ; and, secondly, I will maintain that I do not talk nonsense upon principle, or with any view to profit, but solely and simply," said he—" solely and simply—solely and simply (repeating it three times over) because I am drunk with opium ; and that daily." I replied, that as to the allegation of his enemies, as it seemed to be established upon such respectable testimony, seeing that the three parties concerned all agreed so far, it did not become me to question it ; but the defence set up I must demur to. He proceeded to discuss the matter, and to lay down his reasons ; but it seemed to me so impolite to pursue an argument which must have presumed a man mistaken in a point belonging to his own profession, that I did not press him, even when his course of argument seemed open to objection ; not to mention that a man who talks nonsense, even though " with no view to profit," is not altogether the most agreeable respondent in a dispute. I confess, however, that the authority of a surgeon, and one who was reputed a good one, may seem a weighty one to my prejudice ; but still I must plead my experience, which was greater than his greatest by more than seven thousand drops a day ; and though it was not possible to suppose a medical man unacquainted with the characteristic symptoms of vinous intoxication, yet it struck me that he might proceed on a logical error of using the word intoxication with too careless a latitude, extending it generically to all modes of nervous excitement, instead of restricting it to one special quality of pleasurable elevation, distinguished by well-known symptoms, and connected with tendencies not to be evaded. Two of these tendencies I will mention as diagnostic, or characteristic and inseparable marks of ordinary alcoholic intoxication, but which no excess in the use of opium ever develops. One is the loss of self-com-

But since 25 is $= \frac{1}{4}$, therefore 18 times one quarter of a hundred is = one quarter of 1800, and that, I suppose, is 450. So much this surgeon averaged upon each day for about twenty years. Then suddenly began a fiercer stage of the anguish from his disease. But then, also, the fight was finished, and the victory was won. All duties were fulfilled : his children prosperously launched in life ; and death, which to himself was becoming daily more necessary as a relief from torment, now fell injuriously upon nobody.

mand, in relation to all one's acts and purposes, which steals gradually (though with varying degrees of speed) over *all* persons indiscriminately when indulging in wine or distilled liquors beyond a certain limit. The tongue and other organs become unmanageable: the intoxicated man speaks inarticulately; and, with regard to certain words, makes efforts ludicrously earnest, yet oftentimes unavailing, to utter them. The eyes are bewildered, and see double; grasping too little, and too much. The hand aims awry. The legs stumble, and lose their power of *concurrent* action. To this result *all* people tend, though by varying rates of acceleration. Secondly, as another characteristic, it may be noticed that, in alcoholic intoxication, the movement is always along a kind of arch; the drinker rises through continual ascents to a summit or *apex*, from which he descends through corresponding steps of declension. There is a crowning point in the movement upwards, which once attained cannot be renewed: and it is the blind, unconscious, but always unsuccessful effort of the obstinate drinker to restore this supreme altitude of enjoyment which tempts him into excesses that become dangerous. After reaching this *acme* of genial pleasure, it is a mere necessity of the case to sink through corresponding stages of collapse. Some people have maintained, in my hearing, that they had been drunk upon green tea; and a medical student in London, for whose knowledge in his profession I have reason to feel great respect, assured me, the other day, that a patient, in recovering from an illness, had got drunk on a beef-steak. All turns, in fact, upon a rigorous definition of intoxication.

Having dwelt so much on this first and leading error in respect to opium, I shall notice briefly a second and a third; which are, that the elevation of spirits produced by opium is necessarily followed by a proportionate depression, and that the natural and even immediate consequence of opium is torpor and stagnation, animal as well as mental. The first of these errors I shall content myself with simply denying; assuring my reader, that for ten years, during which I took opium, not regularly, but intermittingly, the day succeeding to that on which I allowed myself this luxury was always a day of unusually good spirits.

With respect to the torpor supposed to follow, or rather (if we were to credit the numerous pictures of Turkish opium-eaters) to accompany, the practice of opium-eating, I deny that also. Certainly, opium is classed under the

head of narcotics, and some such effect it may produce in the end ; but the primary effects of opium are always, and in the highest degree, to excite and stimulate the system. This first stage of its action always lasted with me, during my novitiate, for upwards of eight hours ; so that it must be the fault of the opium-eater himself, if he does not so time his exhibition of the dose, as that the whole weight of its narcotic influence may descend upon his sleep. Turkish opium-eaters, it seems, are absurd enough to sit, like so many equestrian statues, on logs of wood as stupid as themselves. But, that the reader may judge of the degree in which opium is likely to stupefy the faculties of an Englishman, I shall (by way of treating the question illustratively, rather than argumentatively) describe the way in which I myself often passed an opium evening in London, during the period between 1804 and 1812. It will be seen, that at least opium did not move me to seek solitude, and much less to seek inactivity, or the torpid state of self-involution ascribed to the Turks. I give this account at the risk of being pronounced a crazy enthusiast or visionary ; but I regard that little. I must desire my reader to bear in mind that I was a hard student, and at severe studies for all the rest of my time ; and certainly I had a right occasionally to relaxations as well as other people.

The late Duke of Norfolk * used to say, "Next Monday, wind and weather permitting, I purpose to be drunk" ; and in like manner I used to fix beforehand how often within a given time, when, and with what accessory circumstances of festal joy, I would commit a debauch of opium. This was seldom more than once in three weeks ; for at that time I could not have ventured to call every day (as afterwards I did) for "*a glass of laudanum negus, warm, and without sugar.*" No ; once in three weeks sufficed ; and the time selected was either a Tuesday or a Saturday night ; my reason for which was this :—Tuesday and Saturday were for many years the regular nights of performance at

* "*The late Duke of Norfolk*" :—My authority was the late Sir George Beaumont, an old familiar acquaintance of the duke's. But such expressions are always liable to grievous misapplication. By "the late" duke, Sir George meant that duke once so well known to the nation as the partisan friend of Fox, Burke, Sheridan, etc., at the era of the great French Revolution in 1789-93. Since *his* time, I believe there have been three generations of ducal Howards—who are always interesting to the English nation, first from the bloody historic traditions surrounding their great house ; secondly, from the fact of their being at the head of the British Peerage.

the King's Theatre (or Opera House); and there it was in those times that Grassini sang; and her voice (the richest of *contraltos*) was delightful to me beyond all that I had ever heard. Yes; or have since heard; or ever shall hear. I know not what may be the state of the opera-house now, having never been within its walls for seven or eight years; but at that time it was by much the most pleasant place of resort in London for passing an evening.* Half-a-guinea admitted you to the pit, under the troublesome condition, however, of being *en grande tenue*. But to the gallery five shillings admitted you; and that gallery was subject to far less annoyance than the pit of most theatres. The orchestra was distinguished by its sweet and melodious grandeur from all English orchestras; the composition of which, I confess, is not acceptable to my ear, from the predominance of the clangorous instruments, and in some instances from the tyranny of the violin. Thrilling was the pleasure with which almost always I heard this angelic Grassini. Shivering with expectation I sat, when the time drew near for her golden epiphany; shivering I rose from my seat, incapable of rest, when that heavenly and harp-like voice sang its own victorious welcome in its prelusive *threttánelo* — *threttánelo* † (*θρεττάνελω* — *θρεττάνελω*). The choruses were divine to hear; and when Grassini ‡ appeared

* I trust that my reader has not been so inattentive to the windings of my narrative as to fancy me speaking here of the Brown-Brunell and Pymont period. Naturally I had no money disposable at that period for the opera. I am speaking here of years stretching far beyond those boyish scenes—interludes in my Oxford life, or long after Oxford,

† “*Threttánelo* — *threttánelo*”:—The beautiful representative echo by which Aristophanes expresses the sound of the Grecian *phorminx*, or of some other instrument, which conjecturally has been shown most to resemble our modern European harp. In the case of ancient Hebrew instruments used in the temple service, random and idle must be all the guesses through the Greek Septuagint or the Latin Vulgate to identify any one of them. But as to Grecian instruments the case is different; always there is a remote chance of digging up some marble sculpture of orchestral appurtenances and properties.

‡ Yet all things change: this same Grassini, whom once I adored, afterwards, when gorged with English gold, went off to Paris; and when I heard on what terms she lived with a man so unmagnanimous as Napoleon, I came to hate her. Did I complain of any man's hating England, or teaching a woman to hate her benefactress? Not at all; but simply of his adopting at second hand the malice of a jealous nation, with which originally he could have had no sincere sympathy. Hate us, if you please; but not sycophantishly, by way of paying court to others.

in some interlude, as she often did, and poured forth her passionate soul as Andromache at the tomb of Hector, etc., I question whether any Turk, of all that ever entered the paradise of opium-eaters, can have had half the pleasure I had. But, indeed, I honour the barbarians too much, by supposing them capable of any pleasures approaching to the intellectual ones of an Englishman. For music is an intellectual or a sensual pleasure, according to the temperament of him who hears it. And, by the by, with the exception of the fine extravaganza on that subject in "Twelfth Night," I do not recollect more than one thing said adequately on the subject of music in all literature; it is a passage in the "Religio Medici" * of Sir T. Brown, and, though chiefly remarkable for its sublimity, has also a philosophic value, inasmuch as it points to the true theory of musical effects. The mistake of most people is, to suppose that it is by the ear they communicate with music, and therefore that they are purely passive as to its effects. But this is not so; it is by the reaction of the mind upon the notices of the ear (the *matter* coming by the senses, the *form* from the mind) that the pleasure is constructed; and therefore it is that people of equally good ear differ so much in this point from one another. Now opium, by greatly increasing the activity of the mind, generally increases, of necessity, that particular mode of its activity by which we are able to construct out of the raw material of organic sound an elaborate intellectual pleasure. But, says a friend, a succession of musical sounds is to me like a collection of Arabic characters: I can attach no ideas to them. Ideas! my dear friend! there is no occasion for them; all that class of ideas which can be available in such a case has a language of representative feelings. But this is a subject foreign to my present purposes; it is sufficient to say, that a chorus, etc., of elaborate harmony displayed before me, as in a piece of arras-work, the whole of my past life—not as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present and incarnated in the music; no longer painful to dwell upon, but the detail of its incidents removed, or blended in some hazy abstraction, and its passions exalted, spiritualised, and sublimed. All this was to be had for five shillings—that being the

* I have not the book at this moment to consult; but I think the passage begins, "And even that tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad, in me strikes a deep fit of devotion," etc.

price of admission to the gallery ; or, if a man preferred for the high-bred society of the pit, even this might be had for half-a-guinea ; or, in fact, for half-a-crown less, by purchasing beforehand a ticket at the music shops. And over and above the music of the stage and the orchestra, I had all around me, in the intervals of the performance, the music of the Italian language talked by Italian women—for the gallery was usually crowded with Italians—and I listened with a pleasure such as that with which Weld, the traveller, lay and listened, in Canada, to the sweet laughter of Indian women ; for the less you understand of a language, the more sensible you are to the melody or harshness of its sounds. For such a purpose, therefore, it was an advantage to me that in those days I was a poor Italian scholar, reading it but little, and not speaking it at all, nor understanding a tenth part of what I heard spoken.

These were my opera pleasures ; but another pleasure I had, which, as it could be had only on a Saturday night, occasionally struggled with my love of the opera ; for, in those years, Tuesday and Saturday were the regular opera nights. On this subject I am afraid I shall be rather obscure, but, I can assure the reader, not at all more so than Marinus in his *Life of Proclus*, or many other biographers and autobiographers of fair reputation. This pleasure, I have said, was to be had only on a Saturday night. What, then, was Saturday night to me more than any other night ? I had no labours that I rested from ; no wages to receive ; what needed I to care for Saturday night, more than as it was a summons to hear Grassini ? True, most logical reader ; what thou sayest is, and ever will be, unanswerable. And yet so it was, that, whereas different men throw their feelings into different channels, and most men are apt to show their interest in the concerns of the poor chiefly by sympathy with their distresses and sorrows, I at that time was disposed to express mine by sympathising with their pleasures. The pains of poverty I had lately seen too much of—more than I wished to remember ; but the pleasures of the poor, their hopes, their consolations of spirit, and their restings from toil, can never become oppressive to contemplate. Now, Saturday night is the season for the chief regular and periodic return of rest to the poor, and to all that live by bodily labour ; in this point the most hostile sects unite, and acknowledge a common link of brotherhood : almost all Christendom rests from its labours. It is a rest introductory to another

rest ; and divided by a whole day and two nights from the renewal of toil. On this account I feel always, on a Saturday night, as though I also were released from some yoke of bondage, had some wages to receive, and some luxury of repose to enjoy. - For the sake, therefore, of witnessing, upon as large a scale as possible, a spectacle with which my sympathy was so entire, I used often, on Saturday nights, after I had taken opium, to wander forth, without much regarding the direction or the distance, to all the markets, and other parts of London, whither the poor resort on a Saturday night, for laying out their wages. Many a family party, consisting of a man, his wife, and sometimes one or two of their children, have I listened to, as they stood consulting on their ways and means, or the strength of their exchequer, or the price of household articles. Gradually I became familiar with their wishes, their difficulties, and their opinions. Sometimes there might be heard murmurs of discontent ; but far oftener expressions on the countenance, or uttered in words, of patience, of hope, and of reconciliation to their lot. † Generally speaking, the impression left upon my mind was, that the poor are practically more philosophic than the rich ; that they show a more ready and cheerful submission to what they consider as irremediable evils or irreparable losses. Whenever I saw occasion, or could do it without appearing to be intrusive, I joined their parties, and gave my opinion upon the matter in discussion, which, if not always judicious, was always received indulgently. If wages were a little higher, or were expected to be so—if the quartern loaf were a little lower, or it was reported that onions and butter were falling, I was glad ; yet, if the contrary were true, I drew from opium some means of consolation. For opium (like the bee, that extracts its materials indiscriminately from roses and from the soot * of chimneys) can overrule all feelings into a compliance with the master-key. Some of these rambles led me to great distances ; for an opium-eater is too happy to observe the motion of time. And sometimes, in my attempts to steer homewards, upon

* "*Soot*" :—In the large capacious chimneys of the rustic cottages throughout the Lake district, you can see up the entire cavity from the seat which you occupy, as an honoured visitor, in the chimney corner. There I used often to hear (though not to see) bees. Their murmuring was audible, though their bodily forms were too small to be visible at that altitude. On inquiry, I found that soot (chiefly from wood and peats) was useful in some stage of their wax or honey manufacture. ;

nautical principles, by fixing my eye on the pole-star, and seeking ambitiously for a north-west passage, instead of circumnavigating all the capes and headlands I had doubled in my outward voyage, I came suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleys, alleys without soundings, such enigmatical entries, and such sphinx's riddles of streets, without obvious outlets or thoroughfares, as must baffle the audacity of porters, and confound the intellects of hackney coachmen. I could almost have believed, at times, that I must be the first discoverer of some of these *terræ incognitæ*, and doubted whether they had yet been laid down in the modern charts of London. Positively, in one line of communication to the south of Holborn, for foot passengers (known, I doubt not, to many of my London readers), the road lay through a man's kitchen; and as it was a small kitchen, you needed to steer cautiously, or else you might run foul of the dripping-pan. For all this, however, I paid a heavy price in distant years, when the human face tyrannised over my dreams, and the perplexities of my steps in London came back and haunted my sleep, with the feeling of perplexities moral or intellectual, that brought confusion to the reason that brought anguish and remorse to the conscience.

Thus I have shown, or tried to show, that opium does not of necessity produce inactivity or torpor; but that, on the contrary, it often led me into markets and theatres. Yet, in candour, I will admit that markets and theatres are not the appropriate haunts of the opium-eater, when in the divinest state incident to his enjoyment. In that state, crowds become an oppression to him; music, even, too sensual and gross. He naturally seeks solitude and silence, as indispensable conditions of those trances, or profoundest reveries, which are the crown and consummation of what opium can do for human nature. I, whose disease it was to meditate too much and to observe too little, and who, upon my first entrance at college, was nearly falling into a deep melancholy, from brooding too much on the sufferings which I had witnessed in London, was sufficiently aware of these tendencies in my own thoughts to do all I could to counteract them. I was, indeed, like a person who, according to the old Pagan legend, had entered the cave of Trophonius; and the remedies I sought were to force myself into society, and to keep my understanding in continual activity upon subtleties of philosophic speculation. But for these remedies, I should certainly have become hypochondriacally melancholy. In after years,

however, when my cheerfulness was more fully re-established, I yielded to my natural inclination for a solitary life. At that time I often fell into such reveries after taking opium ; and many a time it has happened to me on a summer night—when I have been seated at an open window, from which I could overlook the sea at a mile below me, and could at the same time command a view of some great town standing on a different radius of my circular prospect, but at nearly the same distance—that from sunset to sunrise, all through the hours of night, I have continued motionless, as if frozen, without consciousness of myself as of an object anywise distinct from the multi-form scene which I contemplated from above. Such a scene in all its elements was not unfrequently realised for me on the gentle eminence of Everton. Obliquely to the left lay the many-linguaged town of Liverpool ; obliquely to the right, the multitudinous sea. The scene itself was somewhat typical of what took place in such a reverie. The town of Liverpool represented the earth, with its sorrows and its graves left behind, yet not out of sight, nor wholly forgotten. The ocean, in everlasting but gentle agitation, yet brooded over by dove-like calm, might not unfitly typify the mind, and the mood which then swayed it. For it seemed to me as if then first I stood at a distance aloof from the uproar of life ; as if the tumult, the fever, and the strife, were suspended ; a respite were granted from the secret burdens of the heart ; some sabbath of repose ; some resting from human labours. Here were the hopes which blossom in the paths of life, reconciled with the peace which is in the grave ; motions of the intellect as unwearied as the heavens, yet for all anxieties a halcyon calm ; tranquillity that seemed no product of inertia, but as if resulting from mighty and equal antagonisms ; infinite activities, infinite repose.

O just, subtle, and all-conquering opium ! that, to the hearts of rich and poor alike, for the wounds that will never heal, and for the pangs of grief that “tempt the spirit to rebel,” bringest an assuaging balm ;—eloquent opium ! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath, pleadest effectually for relenting pity, and through one night’s heavenly sleep callest back to the guilty man the visions of his infancy, and hands washed pure from blood ;—O just and righteous opium ! that to the chancery of dreams summonest, for the triumphs of despairing innocence, false witnesses ; and confoundest per-

jury ; and dost reverse the sentences of unrighteous judges ; —thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness, out of the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities and temples, beyond the art of Phidias and Praxiteles—beyond the splendours of Babylon and Hekatómpylos ;* and, “ from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,” callest into sunny light the faces of long-buried beauties, and the blessed household countenances, cleansed from the “ dishonours of the grave.” Thou only givest these gifts to man ; and thou hast the keys of Paradise, O just, subtle, and mighty opium !

* *

Courteous, and I hope indulgent reader, having accompanied me thus far, now let me request you to move onwards for about eight years ; that is to say, from 1804 (when I said that my acquaintance with opium began) to 1812. The years of academic life are now over and gone—almost forgotten ; the student’s cap no longer presses my temples ; if my cap exists at all, it presses those of some youthful scholar, I trust, as happy as myself, and as passionate a lover of knowledge. My gown is, by this time, I dare to say, in the same condition with many thousands of excellent books in the Bodleian—viz., diligently perused by certain studious moths and worms ; or departed, however (which is all that I know of its fate), to that great reservoir of *somewhere*, to which all the tea-cups, tea-caddies, tea-pots, tea-kettles, etc., have departed, which occasional resemblances in the present generation of tea-cups, etc., remind me of having once possessed, but of whose departure and final fate, I, in common with most gownsmen of either university, could give but an obscure and conjectural history. The persecutions of the chapel bell, sounding its unwelcome summons to matins, interrupts my slumbers no longer ; the porter who rang it is dead, and has ceased to disturb anybody ; and I, with many others who suffered much from his tintinnabulous propensities, have now agreed to overlook his errors, and have forgiven him. Even with the bell I am now in charity ; it rings, I suppose, as formerly, thrice a day ; and cruelly annoys, I doubt not, many worthy gentlemen, and disturbs their peace of mind ; but, as to

* i.e., the *hundred-gated* (from ἑκατόν, *hekaton*, a hundred, and πύλη, *pyle*, a gate). This epithet of hundred-gated was applied to the Egyptian Thebes in contradistinction to the ἑπτάπυλος (*heptá-pylos*, or *seven-gated*) which designated the Grecian Thebes, within one day’s journey of Athens.

me, in this year 1812, I regard its treacherous voice no longer (treacherous, I call it, for, by some refinement of malice, it spoke in as sweet and silvery tones as if it had been inviting one to a party); its tones have no longer, indeed, power to reach me, let the wind sit as favourably as the malice of the bell itself could wish; for I am two hundred and fifty miles away from it, and buried in the depth of mountains. And what am I doing amongst the mountains? Taking opium. Yes; but what else? Why, reader, in 1812, the year we are now arrived at, as well as for some years previous, I have been chiefly studying German metaphysics, in the writings of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, etc. And how, and in what manner, do I live? in short, what class or description of men do I belong to? I am at this period—viz., in 1812—living in a cottage; and with a single female servant (*honi soit qui mal y pense*), who, amongst my neighbours, passes by the name of my “housekeeper.” And, as a scholar and a man of learned education, I may presume to class myself as an unworthy member of that indefinite body called *gentlemen*. Partly on the ground I have assigned—partly because, from having no visible calling or business, it is rightly judged that I must be living on my private fortune—I am so classed by my neighbours; and, by the courtesy of modern England, I am usually addressed on letters, etc., *Esquire*, though having, I fear, in the rigorous construction of heralds, antique or antic, dressed like the knaves of spades or diamonds, but slender pretensions to that distinguished honour;—yes, in popular estimation, I am X. Y. Z., *Esquire*, but not Justice of the Peace, nor Custos Rotulorum. Am I married? Not yet. And I still take opium? On Saturday nights. And, perhaps, have taken it unblushingly ever since “the rainy Sunday,” and “the stately Pantheon,” and “the beatific druggist” of 1804? Even so. And how do I find my health after all this opium-eating? in short, how do I do? Why, pretty well, I thank you, reader. In fact, if I dared to say the real and simple truth (though, in order to satisfy the theories of some medical men, I ought to be ill), I was never better in my life than in the spring of 1812; and I hope sincerely, that the quantity of claret, port, or “London particular Madeira,” which, in all probability, you, good reader, have taken, and design to take, for every term of eight years during your natural life, may as little disorder your health as mine was disordered by all the opium I had taken (though in quantity

such that I might well have bathed and swum in it) for the eight years between 1804 and 1812. Hence you may see again the danger of taking any medical advice from "Anastasia";* in divinity, for anything I know, he may be a safe counsellor, but not in medicine. No; it is far better to consult Dr. Buchan, as I did; for I never forgot that worthy man's excellent suggestion, and I was "particularly careful not to take above five-and-twenty ounces of laudanum." To this moderation and temperate use of the article I may ascribe it, I suppose, that as yet at least (that is, in 1812) I am ignorant and unsuspecting of the avenging terrors which opium has in store for those who abuse its long-suffering. At the same time, as yet I had been only a *dilettante* eater of opium; even eight years' practice, with the single precaution of allowing sufficient intervals between every indulgence, has not been sufficient to make opium necessary to me as an article of daily diet. But now comes a different era. Move on, then, if you please, reader, to 1813. In the summer of the year we have just quitted, I had suffered much in bodily health from distress of mind connected with a melancholy event. This event, being nowise related to the subject now before me, further than through the bodily illness which it produced, I need not more particularly notice. Whether this illness of 1812 had any share in that of 1813, I know not; but so it was, that, in the latter year, I was attacked by a most appalling irritation of the stomach, in all respects the same as that which had caused me so much suffering in youth, and accompanied by a revival of all the old dreams. Now, then, it was—viz., in the year 1813—that I became a regular and confirmed (no longer an intermitting) opium-eater. And here I find myself in a perplexing dilemma. Either, on the one hand, I must exhaust the reader's patience by such a detail of my malady, and of my struggles with it, as might suffice to establish the fact of my inability to wrestle any longer with irritation and constant suffering; or, on the other hand, by passing lightly over this critical part of my story, I must forego the benefit of a stronger

* "*Anastasia*":—The reader of this generation will marvel at these repeated references to "*Anastasia*": it is now an almost forgotten book, so vast has been the deluge of novel-writing talent, really original and powerful, which has overflowed our literature during the lapse of thirty-five years from the publication of these Confessions. "*Anastasia*" was written by the famous and opulent Mr. Hope; and was in 1821 a book both of high reputation and of great influence amongst the leading circles of society.

impression left on the mind of the reader, and must lay myself open to the misconstruction of having slipped by the easy and gradual steps of self-indulging persons, from the first to the final stage of opium-eating (a misconstruction to which there will be a lurking predisposition in most readers, from my previous acknowledgments). This is the dilemma, the first horn of which is not to be thought of. It remains, then, that I *postulate* so much as is necessary for my purpose. And let me take as full credit for this as if I had demonstrated it, good reader, at the expense of your patience and my own. Be not so ungenerous as to let me suffer in your good opinion through my own forbearance and regard for your comfort. No; believe all that I ask of you—viz., that I could resist no longer—believe it liberally, and as an act of grace, or else in mere prudence; for, if not, then in my next edition I will make you believe and tremble; and, *à force d'ennuyer*, by mere dint of pandiculation, vulgarly called yawning, I will terrify all readers of mine from ever again questioning any postulate that I shall think fit to make.

This, then, let me repeat: I postulate that, at the time I began to take opium daily, I could not have done otherwise. Whether, indeed, afterwards I might not have succeeded in breaking off the habit, even when it seemed to me that all efforts would be unavailing, and whether many of the innumerable efforts which I *did* make might not have been carried much further, and my gradual reconquests of lost ground might not have been followed up much more energetically—these are questions which I must decline. Perhaps I might make out a case of palliation; but (shall I speak ingenuously?) I confess it, as a besetting infirmity of mine, that I am too much of an Eudæmonist; I hanker too much after a state of happiness, both for myself and others; I cannot face misery, whether my own or not, with an eye of sufficient firmness; and am little capable of encountering present pain for the sake of any revisionary benefit. On some other matters, I can agree with the gentlemen of The Porch* at Manchester in affecting the Stoic philosophy; but not in this. Here I

* A handsome news-room, of which I was very courteously made free, in passing through Manchester, by several gentlemen of that place, is called either *The Porch*, or *The Portico*, which in Greek is the *Stoa*; from which I, a stranger in Manchester, inferred that the subscribers meant to profess themselves Stoics, or followers of Zeno. But I have been since assured that this is a mistake.

take the liberty of an Eclectic philosopher, and I look out for some courteous and considerate sect that will condescend more to the infirm condition of an opium-eater; that are pleasant men and courteous, such as Chaucer describes, to hear confession or to give absolution; and will show some conscience in the penances they inflict, or the efforts of abstinence they exact from poor sinners like myself. An inhuman moralist I can no more endure, in my nervous state, than opium that has not been boiled. At any rate, he who summons me to send out a large freight of self-denial and mortification upon any cruising voyage of moral improvement, must make it clear to my understanding that the concern is a hopeful one. At my time of life (six-and-thirty years of age*), it cannot be supposed that I have much energy to spare; in fact, I find it all little enough for the intellectual labours I have on my hands; and, therefore, let no man expect to frighten me, by a few hard words, into embarking any part of it upon desperate adventures of morality.

Desperate or not, however, the issue of the struggle in 1813 was what I have mentioned; and from this date the reader is to consider me as a regular and confirmed opium-eater, of whom to ask whether on any particular day he had or had not taken opium, would be to ask whether his lungs had performed respiration, or the heart fulfilled its functions. Now, then, reader, you understand what I am; and you are by this time aware, that no old gentleman, "with a snow-white beard," will have any chance of persuading me (like Anastasius) to surrender "the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug." No; I give notice to all, whether moralists or surgeons, that, whatever be their pretensions and skill in their respective lines of practice, they must not hope for any countenance from me, if they think to begin by any savage proposition for a Lent or Ramadan of abstinence from opium. This being fully understood between us, we shall in future sail before the wind; now, then, reader, from the year 1813, where all this time we have been sitting down and loitering, rise up, if you please, walk forward about three years more; draw up the curtain, and you shall see me in a new character.

If any man, poor or rich, were to say that he would tell us what had been the happiest day in his life, and the why and the wherefore, I suppose that we should all cry out, Hear him! hear him! As to the happiest day, that must

* This was written at the time of original publication.

be very difficult for any wise man to assign ; because any event that could occupy so distinguished a place in a man's retrospect of life, or be entitled to have shed a special, separate, and supreme felicity on any one day, ought to be of such an enduring character, as that (accidents apart) it should have continued to shed the same felicity, or one not distinguishably less, on very many years together. To the happiest *lustrum*, however, or even to the happiest *year*, a man may perhaps allowably point without discountenance from wisdom. This year, in *my* case, reader, was the one which we have now reached ; though it stood, I confess, as a parenthesis between years of a gloomier character. It was a year of brilliant water (to speak after the manner of jewellers), set, as it were, and insulated, in the gloomy umbrage of opium. Strange as it may sound, I had a little before this time descended suddenly and without any considerable effort, from three hundred and twenty grains of opium (that is, eight * thousand drops of laudanum) per day, to forty grains, or one-eighth part. Instantaneously, and as if by magic, the cloud of profoundest melancholy which rested upon my brain, like some black vapours that I have seen roll away from the summit of a mountain, drew off in one week ; passed away with its murky banners as simultaneously as a ship that has been stranded, and is floated off by a spring-tide,

“That moveth altogether, if it move at all.”

Now, then, I was again happy : I now took only one thousand drops of laudanum per day—and what was that ? A latter spring had come to close up the season of youth. My brain performed its functions as healthily as ever before. I read Kant again ; and again I understood him, or fancied that I did. Again my feelings of pleasure expanded themselves to all around me ; and, if any man

* I here reckon twenty-five drops of laudanum as equivalent to one grain of opium, which, I believe, is the common estimate. However, as both may be considered variable quantities (the crude opium varying much in strength, and the tincture still more), I suppose that no infinitesimal accuracy can be had in such a calculation. Tea-spoons vary as much in size as opium in strength. Small ones hold about one hundred drops ; so that eight thousand drops, which obviously read into eighty hundred drops, fill a *small* tea-spoon eighty times. But large modern tea-spoons hold very much more. Some even approach in their capacity to dessert-spoons. The reader sees how much I kept within Dr. Buchan's indulgent allowance.

from Oxford or Cambridge, or from neither, had been announced to me in my unpretending cottage, I should have welcomed him with as sumptuous a reception as so poor a man could offer. Whatever else might be wanting to a wise man's happiness, of laudanum I would have given him as much as he wished, and in a silver-gilt, if not golden cup. And, by the way, now that I speak of giving laudanum away, I remember about this time a little incident, which I mention because, trifling as it was, the reader will soon meet it again in my dreams, which it influenced more fearfully than could be imagined. One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst the recesses of English mountains, it is not my business to conjecture; but possibly he was on his road to a seaport—viz., Whitehaven, Workington, etc.—about forty miles distant.*

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl, born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort: his turban, therefore, confounded her not a little; and as it turned out that *his* knowledge of English was exactly commensurate with *hers* of Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master (and, doubtless, giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides, perhaps, a few of the lunar ones), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below, whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. The group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though

* Between the seafaring populations on the coast of Lancashire, and the corresponding populations on the coast of Cumberland (such as Ravenglass, Whitehaven, Workington, Maryport, etc.), there was a slender current of interchange constantly going on, and especially in the days of pressgangs—in part by sea, but in part also by land. By the way, I may mention, as an interesting fact which I discovered from an almanack and itinerary, dated about the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign (say, 1579), that the official route in *her* days for queen's messengers to the north of Ireland, and of course for travellers generally, was not (as now) through Grasmere, and thence by St. John's Vale, Threlkeld (for the short cut by Shoulthwaite Moss was then unknown), Keswick, Cockermouth, and Whitehaven. Up to St. Oswald's Church, Gresmere (so it was then spelled, in deference to its Danish original), the route lay as at present. Thence it turned round the lake to the left, crossed Hammerscar, up *Little* Langdale, across Wrynose to Egremont, and from Egremont to Whitehaven.

not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye more powerfully than any of the statuesque attitudes or groupes exhibited in the ballets at the opera-house, though so ostentatiously complex. In a cottage kitchen, but not looking so much like *that* as a rustic hall of entrance; being pannelled on the wall with dark wood, that from age and rubbing resembled oak, stood the Malay, his turban and loose trousers of dingy white relieved upon the dark panneling; he had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish, though her native spirit of mountain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed, as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. A more striking picture there could not be imagined, than the beautiful English face of the girl,* and its exquisite bloom, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, veneered with mahogany tints by climate and marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures and adorations. Half-hidden by the ferocious-looking Malay, was a little child from a neighbouring cottage, who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the lovely girl for protection.

My knowledge of the oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being, indeed, confined to two words—the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish for opium (*madjoon*), which I have learned from “Anastasius.” And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung’s “Mithridates,” which might have helped me to a few words,

* This girl, Barbara Lewthwaite, was already at that time a person of some poetic distinction, being (unconsciously to herself) the chief speaker in a little pastoral poem of Wordsworth’s. That she was really beautiful, and not merely so described by me for the sake of improving the picturesque effect, the reader will judge from this line in the poem, written perhaps ten years earlier, when Barbara might be six years old:—

“’Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!”

This, coming from William Wordsworth, both a fastidious judge and a truth-speaker of the severest literality, argues some real pretensions to beauty, or real at that time. But it is notorious that, in the anthologies of earth through all her zones, one flower beyond every other is liable to change, which flower is the countenance of woman. Whether in his fine stanzas upon “Mutability,” where the most pathetic instances of this earthly doom are solemnly arrayed, Spenser has dwelt sufficiently upon this the saddest of all, I do not remember. [See Appendix, page 227.]

I addressed him in some lines from the "Iliad"; considering that, of such languages as I possessed, the Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an oriental one. He worshipped me in a devout manner, and replied in what I suppose to have been Malay. In this way I saved my reputation as a linguist with my neighbours; for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure, I presented him, *inter alia*, with a piece of opium. To him, as a native of the East, I could have no doubt that opium was not less familiar than his daily bread; and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth, and bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill some half dozen dragoons, together with their horses, supposing neither bipeds nor quadrupeds to be regularly trained opium-eaters. I felt some alarm for the poor creature; but what could be done? I had given him the opium in pure compassion for his solitary life, since, if he had travelled on foot from London, it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with any human being. Ought I to have violated the laws of hospitality by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, thus frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol? No: there was clearly no help for it. The mischief, if any, was done. He took his leave, and for some days I felt anxious; but, as I never heard of any Malay, or of any man in a turban, being found dead on any part of the very slenderly peopled road between Grasmere and Whitehaven, I became satisfied that he was familiar with opium,* and that I must doubtless have done him the service I designed, by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have digressed to mention, because this Malay (partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his

* This, however, is not a necessary conclusion; the varieties of effect produced by opium on different constitutions are infinite. A London magistrate (Harriott's "Struggles through Life," vol. iii., p. 391, third edition) has recorded that, on the first occasion of his trying laudanum for he gout, he took forty drops; the next night sixty, and on the fifth night eighty, without any effect whatever; and this at an advanced age.

image for some days) fastened afterwards upon my fancy, and through *that* upon my dreams, bringing with him other Malays worse than himself, that ran "a-muck" * at me, and led me into a world of nocturnal troubles. But to quit this episode, and to return to my intercalary year of happiness. I have said already that, on a subject so important to us all as happiness, we should listen with pleasure to any man's experience or experiments, even though he were but a ploughboy, who cannot be supposed to have ploughed very deep in such an intractable soil as that of human pains and pleasures, or to have conducted his researches upon any very enlightened principles. But I, who have taken happiness, both in a solid and a liquid shape, both boiled and unboiled, both East Indian and Turkish—who have conducted my experiments upon this interesting subject with a sort of galvanic battery, and have, for the general benefit of the world, inoculated myself, as it were, with the poison of eight thousand drops of laudanum per day (and for the same reason as a French surgeon inoculated himself lately with a cancer, an English one, twenty years ago, with plague, and a third,† who was also English, with hydrophobia), I, it will be admitted, must surely now know what happiness is, if anybody does. And therefore I will here lay down an analysis of happiness; and, as the most interesting mode of communicating it, I will give it, not didactically, but wrapped up and involved in a picture of one evening, as I spent every evening during the intercalary year, when laudanum, though taken daily, was to me no more than the elixir of pleasure.

Let there be a cottage, standing in a valley,‡ eighteen

* See the common accounts, in any eastern traveller or voyager, of the frantic excesses committed by Malays who have taken opium, or are reduced to desperation by ill luck at gambling.

† He was a surgeon at Brighton.

‡ The cottage and the valley concerned in this description were not imaginary: the valley was the lovely one, *in those days*, of Grasmere; and the cottage was occupied for more than twenty years by myself, as immediate successor, in the year 1809, to Wordsworth. Looking to the limitation here laid down—viz., *in those days*—the reader will inquire, in what way *Time* can have affected the beauty of Grasmere. Do the Westmoreland valleys turn grey-headed? O reader! this is a painful memento for some of us! Thirty years ago, a gang of Vandals (nameless, I thank heaven, to me), for the sake of building a mail-coach road that never would be wanted, carried, at a cost of £3000 to the defrauded parish, a horrid causeway of sheer granite masonry, for three-quarters-of-

miles from any town; no spacious valley, but about two miles long by three-quarters-of-a-mile in average width,—the benefit of which provision is, that all the families resident within its circuit will compose, as it were, one larger household, personally familiar to your eye, and more or less interesting to your affections. Let the mountains be real mountains, between three and four thousand feet high, and the cottage a real cottage, not (as a witty author has it) “a cottage with a double coach-house”; let it be, in fact (for I must abide by the actual scene), a white cottage, embowered with flowering shrubs, so chosen as to unfold a succession of flowers upon the walls and clustering around the windows, through all the months of spring, summer, and autumn; beginning, in fact, with May roses, and ending with jasmine. Let it, however, *not* be spring, nor summer, nor autumn; but winter, in its sternest shape. This is a most important point in the science of happiness. And I am surprised to see people overlook it, as if it were actually matter of congratulation that winter is going, or, if coming, is not likely to be a severe one. On the contrary, I put up a petition, annually, for as much snow, hail, frost, or storm of one kind or other, as the skies can possibly afford. Surely everybody is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a winter fireside—candles at four o’clock, warm hearth-rugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing in ample draperies on the floor, whilst the wind and rain are raging audibly without,

“And at the doors and windows seem to call,
As heaven and earth they would together mell;
Yet the least entrance find they none at all;
Whence sweeter grows our rest secure in massy hall.”

Castle of Indolence.

All these are items in the description of a winter evening, which must surely be familiar to everybody born in a a-mile, right through the loveliest succession of secret forest dells and shy recesses of the lake, margined by unrivalled ferns, amongst which was the *Osmunda regalis*. This sequestered angle of Grasmere is described by Wordsworth, as it unveiled itself on a September morning, in the exquisite poems on the “Naming of Places.” From this also—viz., this spot of ground, and this magnificent crest (the *Osmunda*)—was suggested that unique line—the finest independent line through all the records of verse

“Or lady of the lake,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.”

Rightly, therefore, did I introduce this limitation. The Grasmere before and after this outrage were two different vales,

high latitude. And it is evident that most of these delicacies cannot be ripened, without weather stormy or inclement in some way or other. I am not "*particular*" whether it be snow, or black frost, or wind so strong that (as Mr. Anti-slavery Clarkson says) "you may lean your back against it like a post." I can put up even with rain, provided that it rains cats and dogs, or, as sailors say, "great guns and marlinespikes"; but something of the sort I must have; and if I have it not, I think myself in a manner ill-used: for why am I called on to pay so heavily for winter in coals, candles, etc., if I am not to have the article good of its kind? No: a Canadian winter for my money, or a Russian one, where every man is but a co-proprietor with the north wind in the fee-simple of his own ears. Indeed, so great an epicure am I in this matter, that I cannot relish a winter night fully, if it be much past St. Thomas's Day, and have degenerated into disgusting tendencies towards vernal indications: in fact, it must be divided by a thick wall of dark nights from all return of light and sunshine. Start, therefore, at the first week of November: thence to the end of January, Christmas Eve being the meridian line, you may compute the period when happiness is in season, which, in my judgment, enters the room with the tea-tray. For tea, though ridiculed by those who are naturally coarse in their nervous sensibilities, or are become so from wine-drinking, and are not susceptible of influence from so refined a stimulant, will always be the favourite beverage of the intellectual; and, for my part, I would have joined Dr. Johnson in a *bellum internecinum* against Jonas Hanway, or any other impious person who should have presumed to disparage it. But here, to save myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter, and give him directions for the rest of the picture. Painters do not like white cottages, unless a good deal weather-stained; but, as the reader now understands that it is a winter night, his services will not be required, except for the *inside* of the house.

Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a-half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled, in my family, the drawing-room; but, being contrived "a double debt to pay," it is also, and more justly, termed the library; for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbours. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year.

Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books ; and, furthermore, paint me a good fire ; and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And near the fire paint me a tea-table ; and (as it is clear that no creature can come to see one on such a stormy night) place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray ; and, if you know how to paint such a thing, symbolically or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot—eternal *à parte ante*, and *à parte post* ; for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four in the morning. And, as it is very unpleasant to make tea, or to pour it out for one's-self, paint me a lovely young woman sitting at the table. Paint her arms like Aurora's, and her smiles like Hebe's ; but no, dear M—— ! not even in jest let me insinuate that thy power to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty ; or that the witchcraft of angelic smiles lies within the empire of any earthly pencil. Pass, then, my good painter, to something more within its power ; and the next article brought forward should naturally be myself—a picture of the Opium-eater, with his “ little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug ” lying beside him on the table. As to the opium, I have no objection to see a picture of *that* ; you may paint it, if you choose ; but I apprise you that no “ little ” receptacle would, even in 1816, answer *my* purpose, who was at a distance from the “ stately Pantheon,” and all druggists (mortal or otherwise). No : you may as well paint the real receptacle, which was not of gold, but of glass, and as much like a sublunary wine-decanter as possible. In fact, one day, by a series of happily-conceived experiments, I discovered that it *was* a decanter. Into this you may put a quart of ruby-coloured laudanum ; that, and a book of German metaphysics placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighbourhood ; but as to myself, there I demur. I admit that, naturally, I ought to occupy the foreground of the picture ; that, being the hero of the piece, or (if you choose) the criminal at the bar, my body should be had into court. This seems reasonable ; but why should I confess on this point to a painter ? or why confess it at all ? If the public (into whose private ear I am confidentially whispering my Confessions, and not into my painter's) should chance to have framed some agreeable picture for itself of the Opium-eater's exterior—should have ascribed to him, romantically, an elegant person or a handsome face—why should I barbarously tear

from it so pleasing a delusion?—pleasing both to the public and to me. No: paint me, if at all, according to your own fancy; and since a painter's fancy should teem with beautiful creations, I cannot fail, in that way, to be a gainer. And now, reader, we have run through all the ten categories of my condition, as it stood about 1816-17, up to the middle of which latter year I judge myself to have been a happy man; and the elements of that happiness I have endeavoured to place before you, in the above sketch of the interior of a scholar's library, in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter evening, rain driving vindictively and with malice aforethought against the windows, and darkness such that you cannot see your own hand when held up against the sky.

But now farewell, a long farewell, to happiness, winter or summer! farewell to smiles and laughter! farewell to peace of mind, to tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep! For more than three years and a-half I am summoned away from these. Here opens upon me an Iliad of woes: for I now enter upon

The Pains of Opium

“As when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.”
SHELLEY'S *Revolt of Islam*.

Reader, who have thus far accompanied me, I must request your attention, before we go farther, to a few explanatory notes.

1. You are already aware, I hope—else you must have a low opinion of my logic—that the opium miseries, which are now on the point of pressing forward to the front of this narrative, connect themselves with my early hardships in London (and therefore more remotely with those in Wales) by natural links of affiliation—that is, the early series of sufferings was the parent of the later. Otherwise, these Confessions would break up into two disconnected sections—first, a record of boyish calamities; secondly, a record (totally independent) of sufferings consequent upon excesses in opium. And the two sections would have no link whatever to connect them, except the slight one of having both happened to the same person. But the little attention will show the strictness of the inter-

connection. The boyish sufferings, whether in Wales or London, pressing upon an organ peculiarly weak in my bodily system—viz., the stomach—caused that subsequent distress and irritability of the stomach which drove me to the use of opium as the sole remedy potent enough to control it. Here already there is exposed a sufficient *casual* connection between the two several sections of my experience. The opium would probably never have been promoted into the dignity of a daily and a life-long resource, had it not proved itself to be the one sole agent equal to the task of tranquillising the miseries left behind by the youthful privations. Thus far the *nexus*, as between cause and effect, is sufficiently established between the one experience and the other—between the boyish records and the records of mature life. There needed no other *nexus* to justify the unity of the entire Confessions. But, though not wanted, nevertheless it happens that there is another and a distinct link connecting the two separate records. The main phenomenon by which opium expressed itself permanently, and the sole phenomenon that was communicable, lay in the dreams (and in the peculiar dream-scenery) which followed the opium excesses. But naturally these dreams, and this dream-scenery, drew their outlines and materials—their great lights and shadows—from those profound revelations which had been ploughed so deeply into the heart, from those *encaustic* records which in the mighty furnaces of London life had been burned into the undying memory by the fierce action of misery. And thus in reality the early experiences of erring childhood not only led to the secondary experiences of opium, but also determined the particular form and pressure of the chief phenomena in those secondary experiences. Here is the briefest possible abstract of the total case:—The final object of the whole record lay in the dreams. For the sake of those the entire narrative arose. But what caused the dreams? Opium used in unexampled excess. But what caused this excess in the use of opium? Simply the early sufferings; these, and these only, through the derangements which they left behind in the animal economy. On this mode of viewing the case, moving regressively from the end to the beginning, it will be seen that there is one uninterrupted bond of unity running through the entire succession of experiences—first and last: the dreams were an inheritance from the opium; the opium was an inheritance from the boyish follies.

2. You will think, perhaps, that I am too confidential and communicative of my own private history. It may be so. But my way of writing is rather to think aloud, and follow my own humours, than much to inquire who is listening to me; for, if once I stop to consider what is proper to be said, I shall soon come to doubt whether any part at all is proper. The fact is, I imagine myself writing at a distance of twenty—thirty—fifty years ahead of this present moment, either for the satisfaction of the few who may then retain any interest in myself, or of the many (a number that is sure to be continually growing) who will take an inextinguishable interest in the mysterious powers of opium. For opium is mysterious; mysterious to the extent, at times, of apparent self-contradiction; and so mysterious, that my own long experience in its use—sometimes even in its abuse—did but mislead me into conclusions ever more and more remote from what I now suppose to be the truth. Fifty-and-two years' experience of opium, as a magical resource under *all* modes of bodily suffering, I may now claim to have had—allowing only for some periods of four or six months, during which, by unexampled efforts of self-conquest, I had accomplished a determined abstinence from opium.* These parentheses being subtracted,

* With what final result, I have much difficulty in saying. Invariably, after such victories, I returned, upon deliberate choice (after weighing all the consequences on this side and on that), to the daily use of opium. But with silent changes, many and great (worked apparently by these reiterated struggles), in the opium-eating habits. Amongst other changes was this, that the quantity required gradually fell by an enormous proportion. According to the modern slang phrase, I had in the meridian stage of my opium career used "*fabulous*" quantities. Stating the quantities—not in solid opium, but in the tincture (known to everybody as *laudanum*)—my daily ration was eight thousand drops. If you write down that amount in the ordinary way as 8000, you see at a glance that you may read it into eight quantities of a thousand, or into eight hundred quantities of ten, or lastly, into eighty quantities of one hundred. Now, a single quantity of one hundred will about fill a very old-fashioned obsolete tea-spoon, of that order which you find still lingering amongst the respectable poor. Eighty such quantities, therefore, would have filled eighty of such antediluvian spoons—that is, it would have been the common hospital dose for three hundred and twenty adult patients. But the ordinary tea-spoon of this present nineteenth century is nearly as capacious as the dessert-spoon of our ancestors. Which I have heard accounted for thus:—Throughout the eighteenth century, when first tea became known to the working population, the tea-drinkers were almost exclusively women; men, even in educated classes, very often persisting (down to the French Revolution) in treating such a beverage as an idle and effeminate indulgence. This obstinate

as also, and secondly, some off-and-on fits of tentative and intermitting dalliance with opium in the opening of my career—these deductions allowed for, I may describe myself as experimentally acquainted with opium for something more than half-a-century. What, then, is my final report upon its good and evil results? In particular, upon these two capital tendencies of habitual opium-eating under the popular misconceptions—viz., its supposed necessity of continually clamouring for increasing quantities; secondly, its supposed corresponding declension in power and efficacy. Upon these ugly scandals, what is my most deliberate award? At the age of forty, the reader is aware that, under our ancestral proverb, every man is a fool or a physician. Apparently our excellent ancestors, aiming undeniably at alliteration, spelled *physician* with an *f*. And why not? A man's physic might be undeniable, although his spelling should be open to some slight improvements. But I presume that the proverb meant to exact from any man only so much medical skill as should undertake the responsibility of his own individual health. It is my duty, it seems, thus far to be a physician—to guarantee, so far as human foresight *can* guarantee, my own corporeal sanity. And this, trying the case by ordinary practical tests, I have accomplished. And I add solemnly, that without opium, most certainly I could not have accomplished such a result. Thirty-five years ago, beyond all doubt, I should have been in my grave. And as to the two popular dilemmas—that either you must renounce opium, or else indefinitely augment the daily ration; and, secondly, that, even submitting to such a postulate, you must content yourself, under any scale of doses, with an effect continually decaying, in fact, that you must ultimately descend into the despairing condition of the martyr to dram-drinking—at this point, I make a resolute stand in blank denial of the whole doctrine. Originally, when first entering upon my opium career, I did so with great anxiety: and before my eyes floated for ever the analogies—dim or *not* dim, according to my spirits at the moment—of the poor, perishing brandy-drinker,

twist in masculine habits it was that secretly controlled the manufacture of tea-spoons. Up to Waterloo, tea-spoons were adjusted chiefly to the calibre of female mouths. Since then, greatly to the benefit of the national health, the grosser and browner sex have universally fallen into the effeminate habit of tea-drinking; and the capacity of tea-spoons has naturally conformed to the new order of cormorant mouths that have alighted by myriads upon the tea-trays of these later generations.

often on the brink of *delirium tremens* ! Opium I pursued under a harsh necessity, as an unknown, shadowy power, leading I knew not whither, and a power that might suddenly change countenance upon this unknown road. Habitually I lived under such an impression of awe as we have all felt from stories of fawns, or seeming fawns, that have run before some mounted hunter for many a league, until they have tempted him far into the mazes of a boundless forest, and at that point, where all regress had become lost and impossible, either suddenly vanished, leaving the man utterly bewildered, or assumed some more fearful shape. A part of the evil which I feared actually unfolded itself ; but all was due to my own ignorance, to neglect of cautionary measures, or to gross mismanagement of my health in points where I well knew the risks, but grievously underrated their urgency and pressure. I was temperate : that solitary advantage I had ; but I sank under the lulling seductions of opium into total sedentariness, and *that* whilst holding firmly the belief, that powerful exercise was omnipotent against all modes of debility or obscure nervous irritations. The account of my depression, and almost of my helplessness, in the next memorandum (No. 3), is faithful as a description to the real case. But, in ascribing that case to opium, as any transcendent and overmastering agency, I was thoroughly wrong. Twenty days of exercise, twenty times twenty miles of walking, at the ordinary pace of three and a-half miles an hour, or perhaps half that amount, would have sent me up as buoyantly as a balloon into regions of natural and healthy excitement, where dejection is an impossible phenomenon. O heavens ! how man abuses or neglects his natural resources ! Yes, the thoughtful reader is disposed to say ; but very possibly distinguishing between such *natural* resources and opium as a resource that is *not* natural, but highly artificial, or even absolutely unnatural. I think otherwise : upon the basis of my really vast, perhaps unequalled, experience (let me add of my *tentative* experience, varying its trials in every conceivable mode, so as to meet the question at issue under every angle), I advance these three following propositions, all of them unsuspected by the popular mind, and the last of them (as cannot much longer fail to be discovered) bearing a national value—I mean, as meeting our English hereditary complaint :—

I. With respect to the morbid growth upon the opium-eater of his peculiar habit, when once rooted in the system,

and throwing out *tentacula* like a cancer, it is out of my power to deliver any such oracular judgment upon the case—i.e., upon the apparent danger of such a course, and by what stages it might be expected to travel towards its final consummation—as naturally I should wish to do. Being an oracle, it is my wish to behave myself like an oracle, and not to evade any decent man's questions in the way that Apollo too often did at Delphi. But, in this particular instance before me, the accident of my own individual seamanship in presence of this storm interfered with the natural evolution of the problem in its extreme form of danger. I had become too uneasy under the consciousness of that intensely artificial condition into which I had imperceptibly lapsed through unprecedented quantities of opium; the shadows of eclipse were too dark and lurid not to rouse and alarm me into a spasmodic effort for reconquering the ground which I had lost. Such an effort I made: every step by which I had gone astray did I patiently untread. And thus I fought off the natural and spontaneous catastrophe, whatever *that* might be, which mighty Nature would else have let loose for redressing the wrongs offered to herself. But what followed? In six or eight months more, upon fresh movements arising of insupportable nervous irritation, I fled back into the same opium lull. To and fro, up and down, did I tilt upon those mountainous seas, for year after year. "See-saw,* like Margery Daw, that sold her bed and lay on straw." Even so did I, led astray, perhaps, by the classical example of Miss Daw, see-saw for year after year, out and in, of manœuvres the most intricate, dances the most elaborate, receding or approaching, round my great central sun of opium. Sometimes I ran perilously close into my perihelion; sometimes I became frightened, and wheeled off into a vast cometary aphelion, where for six months "opium" was a word unknown. How Nature stood all these see-sawings is quite a mystery to me: I must have led her a sad life in those days. Nervous irritation forced me, at times, upon frightful excesses; but terror from anomalous symptoms sooner or later

* "See-saw," etc. :—O dear reader, surely you don't want an oracle to tell you that this is a good old nursery lyric, which through four centuries has stood the criticism—stood the anger against Daw's enemies—stood the pity for Daw herself, so infamously reduced to straw—of children through eighty generations, reckoning five years to each nursery succession.

forced me back. This terror was strengthened by the vague hypotheses current at that period about spontaneous combustion. Might I not myself take leave of the literary world in that fashion? According to the popular fancy, there were two modes of this spontaneity; and really very little to choose between them. Upon one variety of this explosion, a man blew up in the dark, without match or candle near him, leaving nothing behind him but some bones, of no use to anybody, and which were supposed to be *his* only because nobody else ever applied for them. It was fancied that some volcanic agency—an unknown disposition—accumulated from some vast redundancy of brandy, furnished the self-exploding principle. But this startled the faith of most people; and a more plausible scheme suggested itself, which depended upon the concurrence of a lucifer-match. Without an incendiary, a man could not take fire. We sometimes see the hands of inveterate dram-drinkers throw off an atmosphere of intoxicating vapours, strong enough to lay flies into a state of sleep or *coma*; and on the same principle, it was supposed that the breath might be so loaded with spirituous particles, as to catch fire from a match applied to a pipe when held between the lips. If so, then what should hinder the “devouring element” (as newspapers call fire) from spreading through the throat to the cavity of the chest: in which case, not being insured, the man would naturally become a total loss. Opium, however, it will occur to the reader, is not alcohol. That is true. But it might, for anything that was known experimentally, be ultimately worse. Coleridge, the only person known to the public as having dallied systematically and for many years with opium, could not be looked to for any candid report of its history and progress; besides that, Coleridge was under a permanent craze of having nearly accomplished his own liberation from opium; and thus he had come to have an *extra* reason for self-delusion. Finding myself, therefore, walking on a solitary path of bad repute, leading *whither* no man’s experience could tell me, I became proportionably cautious; and if nature had any plot for making an example of me, I was resolved to baulk her. Thus it was that I never followed out the seductions of opium to their final extremity. But, nevertheless, in evading that extremity, I stumbled upon as great a discovery as if I had *not* evaded it. After the first or second self-conquest in this conflict—although finding it impos-

sible to persist through more than a few months in the abstinence from opium—I remarked, however, that the domineering tyranny of its exactions was at length steadily declining. Quantities noticeably less had now become sufficient: and after the fourth of these victories, won with continually decreasing efforts, I found that not only had the daily dose (upon relapsing) suffered a self-limitation to an enormous extent, but also that, upon any attempt obstinately to renew the old doses, there arose a new symptom—viz., an irritation on the surface of the skin—which soon became insupportable, and tended to distraction. In about four years, without any further efforts, my daily ration had fallen *spontaneously* from a varying quantity of eight, ten, or twelve thousand drops of laudanum to about three hundred. I describe the drug as *laudanum*, because another change ran along collaterally with this supreme change—viz., that the solid opium began to require a length of time, continually increasing, to expand its effects sensibly, oftentimes not less than four hours; whereas the tincture manifested its presence instantaneously.

Thus, then, I had reached a position from which authoritatively it might be pronounced, as a result of long, anxious, and vigilant experience, that, on the assumption of earnest (even though intermitting) efforts towards recurrent abstinences on the part of the opium-eater, the practice of indulging to the very greatest excess in this narcotic tends to a natural (almost an inevitable) euthanasy. Many years ago, when briefly touching on this subject, I announced (as a fact even *then* made known to me) that no instance of abstinence, though it were but of three days' continuance, ever perishes. Ten grains, deducted from a daily ration of five hundred, will tell through a series of many weeks, and will be found again modifying the final result, even at the close of the year's reckoning. At this day, after a half-century of oscillating experience, and after no efforts or trying acts of self-denial beyond those severe ones attached to the several processes (five or six in all) of re-conquering my freedom from the yoke of opium, I find myself pretty nearly at the same station which I occupied at that vast distance of time. It is recorded of Lord Nelson, that, even after the Nile and Copenhagen, he still paid the penalty, on the first days of resuming his naval life, which is generally exacted by nature from the youngest little middy or the rawest griffin—viz., sea-sickness. And this happens to a considerable

proportion of sailors: they do not recover their sea-legs till some days after getting afloat. The very same thing happens to veteran opium-eaters, when first, after long intermissions, resuming too abruptly their ancient familiarities with opium. It is a fact, which I mention as indicating the enormous revolutions passed through, that, within these five years, I have turned pale, and felt warnings, pointing towards such an uneasiness, after taking not more than twenty grains of opium. At present, and for some years, I have been habitually content with five or six grains daily, instead of three hundred and twenty to four hundred grains. Let me wind up this retrospect with saying, that the powers of opium, as an anodyne, but still more as a tranquilliser of nervous and anomalous sensations, have not in the smallest degree decayed; and that, if it has casually unveiled its early power of exacting slight penalties from any trivial inattention to accurate proportions, it has more than commensurately renewed its ancient privilege of lulling irritation, and of supporting preternatural calls for exertion.

My first proposition, therefore, amounts to this—that the process of weaning one's-self from the deep bondage of opium, by many people viewed with despairing eyes, is not only a possible achievement, and one which grows easier in every stage of its progress, but is favoured and promoted by nature in secret ways that could not, without some experience, have been suspected. This, however, is but a sorry commendation of any resource making great pretensions, that, by a process confessedly trying to human firmness, it can ultimately be thrown aside. Certainly little would be gained by the negative service of cancelling a drawback upon any agency whatever, until it were shown that this drawback has availed to disturb and neutralise great positive blessings lying within the gift of that agency. What are the advantages connected with opium that can merit any such name as blessings?

II. Briefly let me say, in the *second* proposition, that if the reader had, in any South American forest, seen growing rankly some great febrifuge (such as the Jesuits' bark), he would probably have noticed it with slight regard. To understand its value, he must first have suffered from intermittent fever. Bark might strike him as an unnatural stimulant; but, when he came to see that tertian or quartan fever was also an unnatural pressure

upon human energies, he would begin to guess that two counter unnaturals may terminate in one most natural and salubrious result. Nervous irritation is the secret desolator of human life; and for this there is probably no adequate controlling power but that of opium, taken daily, under steady regulation.

III. But even more momentous is the burden of my *third* proposition. Are you aware, reader, what it is that constitutes the scourge (physically speaking) of Great Britain and Ireland? All readers, who direct any part of their attention to medical subjects, must know that it is pulmonary consumption. If you walk through a forest at certain seasons, you will see what is called a *blaze* of white paint upon a certain *élite* of the trees marked out by the forester as ripe for the axe. Such a blaze, if the shadowy world could reveal its futurities, would be seen everywhere distributing its secret badges of cognisance amongst our youthful men and women. Of those that, in the expression of Pericles, constitute the vernal section of our population, what a multitudinous crowd would be seen to wear upon their foreheads the same sad, ghastly blaze, or some equivalent symbol of dedication to an early grave. How appalling in its amount is this annual slaughter amongst those that should by birthright be specially the children of hope, and levied impartially from *every* rank of society! Is the income-tax or the poor-rate, faithful as each is to its regulating tide-tables, paid by *any* class with as much punctuality as this premature *florilegium*, this gathering and rendering up of blighted blossoms, by *all* classes? Then comes the startling question—that pierces the breaking hearts of so many thousand afflicted relatives—Is there no remedy? Is there no palliation of the evil? Waste not a thought upon the idle question, whether he that speaks is armed with this form or that form of authorisation and sanction! Think within yourself how infinite would be the scorn of any poor sorrow-stricken mother, if she—standing over the coffin of her daughter—could believe or could imagine that any vestige of ceremonial scruples, or of fool-born superstitions, or the terror of a word, or old traditional prejudice, had been allowed to neutralise one chance in a thousand for her daughter—had by possibility (but, as I could tell her, had sometimes to a certainty) stepped between patients and deliverance from the grave, sure and perfect! “What matter,” she would cry out, indignantly, “who it is that

says the thing, so long as the thing itself is true ? ” It is the potent and faithful *word* that is wanted, in perfect slight of the organ through which it is uttered. Let me premise this notorious fact, that all consumption, though latent in the constitution, and indicated often to the eye in bodily conformation, does not therefore manifest itself as a disease, until some form of “ cold,” or bronchitis, some familiar affection of the chest or of the lungs, arises to furnish a starting-point for the morbid development.* Now the one fatal blunder lies in suffering that development to occur ; and the one counterworking secret for pre-arrestment of this evil lies in steadily, by whatever means, keeping up and promoting the insensible perspiration. In that one simple art of controlling a constant function of the animal economy, lies a magician’s talisman for defeating the forces leagued against the great organs of respiration. Pulmonary affections, if not *previously* suffered to develop themselves, cannot live under the hourly counterworking of this magical force. Consequently, the one question in arrear, is, what potent drug is that which possesses this power, a power like that of “ Amram’s son,” for evoking salubrious streams, welling forth benignly from systems else parched and arid as rocks in the wilderness ? There is none that I know of answering the need but opium. The powers of that great agent I first learned dimly to guess at from a remark made to me by a lady in London ; then, and for some time previously, she had been hospitably entertaining Coleridge, whom, indeed, she tended with the anxiety of a daughter. Consequently, she was familiarly acquainted with his opium habits ; and on my asking, in reply to some remark of hers, how she could be so sure as her words implied, that Coleridge was just then likely to be incapacitated for writing (or, indeed, for any literary *exertion*), she

* Here is a parallel case, equally fatal where it occurs, but happily moving within a far narrower circle. About fifty years ago, Sir Everard Home, a surgeon of the highest class, mentioned as a dreadful caution, that, within his own experience, many an indolent tumour in the face, not unfrequently the most trifling pimple, which for thirty or more years had caused no uneasiness whatever, suddenly might chance to receive the slightest possible wound from a razor in the act of shaving. What followed ? Once disturbed, the trivial excrescence became an open cancer. Is the parallel catastrophe in the pulmonary system, when pushed forward into development, at all less likely to hide its importance from uninstructed eyes ? Yet, on the other hand, it is a thousand times more likely to happen.

said, " Oh, I know it well by the glistening of his cheeks." Coleridge's face, as is well known to his acquaintances, exposed a large surface of cheek ; too large for the intellectual expression of his features generally, had not the final effect been redeemed by what Wordsworth styled his " godlike forehead." The result was, that no possible face so broadly betrayed and published any effects whatever, especially these lustrous effects from excesses in opium. For some years I failed to consider reflectively, or else, reflecting, I failed to decipher, this resplendent acreage of cheek. But at last, either *proprio Marte*, or prompted by some medical hint, I came to understand that the glistening face, glorious from afar like the old Pagan face of the demigod Æsculapius, simply reported the gathering accumulations of insensible perspiration. In the very hour, a memorable hour, of making that discovery, I made another. My own history, medically speaking, involved a mystery. At the commencement of my opium career, I had myself been pronounced repeatedly a martyr elect to pulmonary consumption. And although, in the common decencies of humanity, this opinion upon my prospects had always been accompanied with some formal words of encouragement—as, for instance, that constitutions, after all, varied by endless differences ; that nobody could fix limits to the powers of medicine, or, in default of medicine, to the healing resources of nature herself ; yet, without something like a miracle in my favour, I was instructed to regard myself as a condemned subject. That was the upshot of these agreeable communications ; alarming enough ; and they were rendered more so by these three facts:—first, that the opinions were pronounced by the highest authorities in Christendom—viz., the physicians at Clifton and the Bristol Hotwells, who saw more of pulmonary disorders in one twelvemonth than the rest of the profession through all Europe in a century ; for the disease, it must be remembered, was almost peculiar as a national scourge to Britain, interlinked with the local accidents of the climate and its restless changes ; so that only in England could it be studied ; and even there only in perfection at these Bristolian adjacencies—the reason being this, all opulent patients resorted to the Devonshire watering-places, where the balmy temperature of the air and prevailing winds allowed the myrtle and other greenhouse shrubs to stand out-of-doors all winter through ; and naturally on the road to Devonshire all patients alike touched at Clifton. There

I was myself continually resident. Many, therefore, and of supreme authority, were the prophets of evil that announced to me my doom. Secondly, they were countenanced by the ugly fact, that I out of eight children was the one who most closely inherited the bodily conformation of a father who had died of consumption at the early age of thirty-nine. Thirdly, I offered at the first glance, to a medical eye, every symptom of *phthisis* broadly and conspicuously developed. The hectic colours on the face, the nocturnal perspirations, the growing embarrassment of the respiration, and other expressions of gathering feebleness under any attempts at taking exercise—all these symptoms were steadily accumulating between the age of twenty-two and twenty-four. What was it that first arrested them? Simply the use, continually becoming more regular, of opium. Nobody recommended this drug to me; on the contrary, under that ignorant horror which everywhere invested opium, I saw too clearly that any avowed use of it would expose me to a rabid persecution.* Under the sincere and unaffected hope of saving me from destruction, I should have been hunted into the grave within six months. I kept my own counsel; said nothing, awakened no suspicions; persevered more and more determinately in the use of opium; and finally effected so absolute a conquest over all pulmonary symptoms, as could not have failed to fix upon me the astonishment of Clifton, had not the sense of wonder been broken by the lingering time consumed in the several stages of the malady, and still more effectually by my own personal withdrawal from Clifton and its neighbourhoods.

Finally, arose what will inevitably turn out a more decisive chapter in such a record. I had always fixed my eyes and my expectations upon a revolution in the social history of opium, which could not (as I assured myself) by accident or by art be materially deferred. The great

* "*Rabid persecution*":—I do not mean that, in the circumstances of my individual position, any opening could have arisen to an opposition more than verbal; since it would have been easy for me at all times to withdraw myself by hundreds of leagues from controversies upon the case. But the reasons for concealment were not the less urgent. For it would have been painful to find myself reduced to the dilemma of either practising habitual and complex dissimulation, or, on the other hand, of throwing myself headlong into that fiery vortex of hotheaded ignorance upon the very name of opium, which to this hour (though with less of rancorous bigotry) makes it hazardous to avow any daily use of so potent a drug.

social machinery of life-insurance, supposing no other agency to be brought into play, how would *that* affect the great medicinal interests of opium? I knew that insurance offices, and the ablest actuaries of such offices, were not less ignorant upon the real merits of the opium question, and (which was worse) not less profoundly *prejudiced*, or less fanatical in their prejudices, than the rest of society. But, then, there were interests, growing continually, which would very soon force them into relaxing these prejudices. It would be alleged, at first, that opium-eating increased the risk of a life-insurance. Waiving the question whether it really *did* increase that risk, in any case that increase of risk, like other risks, could be valued, and *must* be valued. New habits were arising in society: that I well knew. And the old machineries for insuring life interests, under these or any other shifting conditions, would be obliged to adapt themselves to changing circumstances. If the old offices should be weak enough to persist in their misdirected obstinacy, new ones would arise. Meantime the history of this question moved through the following aspects:—Sixteen and seventeen years ago, the offices all looked with horror upon opium-eaters. Thus far, all men must have disapproved the principles of their policy. Habitual brandy-drinkers met with no repulse. And yet alcohol leads into daily dangers—for instance, that of *delirium tremens*. But no man ever heard of opium leading into *delirium tremens*. In the one case, there are well-ascertained and notorious dangers besetting the path; but, in the other, supposing any corresponding dangers to exist, they have yet to be discovered. However, the offices would not look at us who came forward avowing ourselves to be opium-eaters. Myself in particular they regarded, I believe, as the abomination of desolation. And fourteen offices in succession, within a few months, repulsed me as a candidate for insurance on that solitary ground of having owned myself to be an opium-eater. The insurance was of very little consequence to myself, though involving some interest to others. And I contented myself with saying, “Ten years hence, gentlemen, you will have come to understand your own interests better.” In less than *seven* years I received a letter from Mr. Tait, surgeon to the Police Force in Edinburgh, reporting a direct investigation officially pursued by him under private instructions received from two or more insurance offices. I knew, at the beginning of these seven years, or had

strong reasons for believing, that the habit of opium-eating was spreading extensively, and through classes of society widely disconnected. This diffusion would, beyond a doubt, as one of its earliest consequences, coerce the insurance offices into a strict revision of their old blind policy. Accordingly it had already done so; and the earliest fruits of this revolution were now before me in the proof-sheets so obligingly transmitted by Mr. Tait. His object, as I understood it, in sending these proofs to myself, was simply to collect such additional notices, suggestions, or sceptical queries, as might reasonably be anticipated from any reflective opium experience so extensive as my own. Most unhappily, this gentleman, during the course of our brief correspondence, was suddenly attacked by typhus fever; and, after a short illness, to my own exceeding regret, he died. On all accounts I had reason for sorrow. Knowing him only through his very interesting correspondence with myself, I had learned to form high expectations from Mr. Tait's philosophic spirit and his determined hostility to traditional cant. He had recorded, in the communications made to myself, with great minuteness and anxiety for rigour of accuracy, the cases of more than ninety patients. And he had shown himself inexorably deaf to all attempts at confounding evils specially belonging to opium as a stimulant, as a narcotic, or as a poison, with those which belong to opium merely as a cause of constipation or other ordinary irregularities in the animal economy. Most people of sedentary habits, but amongst such people notoriously those who think much, need some slight means of stimulating the watch-work of the animal system into action. Neglect of such means will of course derange the health. But in such derangements there is no special impeachment of opium: many thousands of agents terminate in the same or more obstinate derangements, unless vigilantly counteracted. The paramount mission of Mr. Tait, under his instructions from insurance offices, as I interpreted his own account of this mission, was, to report firmly and decisively upon the tendencies of opium in relation to the lengthening or shortening of life. At that point where his proof-sheets were interrupted by the fatal attack of fever, he had not entirely finished his record of cases; so that his final judgment or summing up had not commenced. It was, however, evident to me in what channel this final judgment would have flowed. To a certainty, he would have autho-

rised his clients (the insurance offices) to dismiss all anxiety as to the life-abridging tendencies of opium. But he would have pointed their jealousy in another direction—viz., this, that in some proportion of cases there may always be a reasonable ground for suspecting, not the opium as separately in itself any cause of mischief, but the opium as a conjectural indication of some secret distress or irritation that had fastened upon the system, and had in that way sought relief; cases, in short, which the use of opium had not caused, but which, on the contrary, had caused the use of opium;—opium having been called in to redress or to relieve the affection. In all such circumstances, the insurance office is entitled to call for a frank disclosure of the ailment; but not, as hitherto, entitled to assume the opium as itself an ailment. It may very easily have happened, that simply the genial restoration derived from opium, its power of qualifying a man suddenly to face (that is, upon an hour's warning to face) some twelve hours' unusual exertion, qualifying him both as to spirits and as to strength; or again, simply the general purpose of seeking relief from ennui, or *tædium vitæ*—any one of these motives may satisfactorily account for the applicant's having resorted to opium. He might reply to the office in Professor Wilson's word,* “Gentlemen, I am a *Hedonist*; and, if you *must* know why I take opium, that's the reason why.” But still, upon every admission from a candidate that he took opium, it would be a prudent question and a just question on the part of the office, to ask “*why*”; and in what circumstances the practice had originated. If in any local uneasiness, then would arise a natural right on the part of the office to press for a surgical examination. But, apart from such special cases, it was evident that this acute and experienced surgeon saw no reason whatever in the simple practice of opium-eating for hesitating upon a life-insurance proposal, or for exacting a higher rate of premium.

Here I pause. The reader will infer, from what I have now said, that all passages, written at an earlier period under cloudy and uncorrected views of the evil agencies presumable in opium, stand retracted; although, shrinking from the labour of altering an error diffused so widely under my own early misconceptions of the truth, I have suffered them to remain as they were. My general views

* From the Greek word for *voluptuous pleasure*—viz., *Hedone* (ἡδονή)—Professor Wilson coined the English word *Hedonist*, which he sometimes applied in playful reproach to myself and others.

upon the powers and natural tendencies of opium were all supported and strengthened by this fortunate advantage of a professional correspondence. My special doctrine I now repeat at this point of valediction, and in a memorable form. Lord Bacon said once, too boldly and hazardously, that he who discovers the secret of making myrrh soluble by human blood, has discovered the secret of immortal life. I propose a more modest form of magic—that he who discovers the secret of stimulating and keeping up unintermittingly the insensible perspiration, has discovered the secret of intercepting pulmonary consumption. In my medical character, I here take leave of the reader, and fall back into the current of my regular narrative.

* * * * *

3. My studies have now been long interrupted. I cannot read to myself with any pleasure, hardly with a moment's endurance. Yet I sometimes read aloud for the pleasure of others; because reading is an accomplishment of mine, and, in the slang use of the word *accomplishment* as a superficial and ornamental attainment, almost the only one I possess; and formerly, if I had any vanity at all connected with any endowment or attainment of mine, it was with this; for I had observed that no accomplishment is more rare. Actors are the worst readers of all. John Kemble is not effective as a reader, though he has the great advantage of mature scholarship; and his sister, the immortal Siddons, with all her superiority to him in voice, reads even less effectively. She reads nothing well but dramatic works. In the "Paradise Lost," which I heard her attempt at Barley Wood, her failure was distressing; almost as distressing as the sycophantic applause of the surrounding company—all lost, of course, in nearly speechless admiration. Yet I am sensible that this contemptuous feeling for the circle of admirers is scarcely justified. What *should* the poor creatures have done? Already, in the mere attempt to win their suffrages, in placing herself once again upon trial, there was a condescension on the part of Mrs. Siddons, after which free judgment became impossible. I felt a wish to address Mrs. Siddons thus—You that have read to royalty at Windsor, nay, have even been desired to *sit down* at Windsor whilst reading, ever afterwards are a privileged person, liable to no accent of truth. Our feelings, as not free to take any natural expression, can be

of no value. Suffer us to be silent, if only for the dignity of human nature. And do you yourself be silent, if only for the dignity of that once unequalled voice. Neither Coleridge nor Southey is a good reader of verse. Southey is admirable almost in all things, but not in this. Both he and Coleridge read as if crying, or at least wailing lugubriously. People in general either read poetry without any passion at all, or else overstep the modesty of nature. Of late, if I have felt moved by anything in books, it has been by the grand lamentations of "Sampson Agonistes," or the great harmonies of the Satanic speeches in "Paradise Regained," when read aloud by myself. We are far from towns; but a young lady sometimes comes and drinks tea with us; at her request and M——'s, I now and then read Wordsworth's Poems to them. (Wordsworth, by the by, is the only poet I ever met who could read his own verses; often, indeed, he reads admirably.)

For nearly two years I believe that I read nothing and studied nothing. Analytic studies are continuous studies, and not to be pursued by fits and starts, or fragmentary efforts. All these were become insupportable to me; I shrank from them with a sense of powerless and infantine feebleness that gave me an anguish the greater from remembering the time when I grappled with them to my own hourly delight; and for this further reason, because I had devoted the labour of my whole life, had dedicated my intellect, blossoms and fruits, to the slow and elaborate toil of constructing one single work, to which I had presumed to give the title of an unfinished work of Spinoza's—viz., "*De Emendatione Humani Intellectûs*." This was now lying locked up as by frost, like any Spanish bridge or aqueduct begun upon too great a scale for the resources of the architect; and, instead of surviving me, as a monument of wishes at least, and aspirations, and long labours, dedicated to the exaltation of human nature in that way in which God had best fitted me to promote so great an object, it was likely to stand a memorial to my children of hopes defeated, of baffled efforts, of materials uselessly accumulated, of foundations laid that were never to support a superstructure, of the grief and the ruin of the architect. In this state of imbecility, I had, for amusement, turned my attention to political economy; my understanding, which formerly had been as active and restless as a panther, could not, I suppose (so long as I lived at all), sink into utter lethargy; and political economy offers this advantage to

a person in my state, that though it is eminently an organic science (no part, that is to say, but what acts on the whole, as the whole again reacts on and through each part), yet still the several parts may be detached and contemplated singly. Great as was the prostration of my powers at this time, yet I could not forget my knowledge; and my understanding had been for too many years intimate with severe thinkers, with logic, and the great masters of knowledge, not to be aware of a great call made by political economy at this crisis for a new law and a transcendent legislator. Suddenly, in 1818, a friend in Edinburgh sent me down Mr. Ricardo's book; and, recurring to my own prophetic anticipation of some coming legislator for this science, I said, before I had finished the first chapter, "Thou art the man!" Wonder and curiosity were emotions that had long been dead in me. Yet I wondered once more—wondered at myself that could once again be stimulated to the effort of reading; and much more I wondered at the book. Had this profound work been really written during the tumultuous hurry of the nineteenth century? Could it be that an Englishman, and he not in academic bowers, but oppressed by mercantile and senatorial cares, had accomplished what all the universities of Europe, and a century of thought, had failed even to advance by one hair's-breadth? Previous writers had been crushed and overlaid by the enormous weights of facts, details, and exceptions; Mr. Ricardo had deduced, *à priori*, from the understanding itself, laws which first shot arrowy light into the dark chaos of materials, and had thus constructed what hitherto was but a collection of tentative discussions into a science of regular proportions, now first standing upon an eternal basis.

Thus did one simple work of a profound understanding avail to give me a pleasure and an activity which I had not known for years; it roused me even to write, or, at least, to dictate what M—— wrote for me. It seemed to me that some important truths had escaped even "the inevitable eye" of Mr. Ricardo; and, as these were, for the most part, of such a nature that I could express or illustrate them briefly and elegantly by algebraic symbols, the whole would hardly have reached the bulk of a pamphlet. With M—— for my amanuensis, even at this time, incapable as I was of all general exertion, I drew up, therefore, my "Prolegomena to all Future Systems of Political Economy."

This exertion, however, was but a momentary flash, as the sequel showed. Arrangements were made at a provincial press, about eighteen miles distant, for printing it. An additional compositor was retained for some days, on this account. The work was even twice advertised; and I was, in a manner, pledged to the fulfilment of my intention. But I had a preface to write, and a dedication, which I wished to make impressive, to Mr. Ricardo. I found myself quite unable to accomplish all this. The arrangements were countermanded, the compositor dismissed, and my "Prolegomena" rested peacefully by the side of its elder and more dignified brother.

In thus describing and illustrating my intellectual torpor, I use terms that apply, more or less, to every part of the years during which I was under the Circean spells of opium. But for misery and suffering, I might, indeed, be said to have existed in a dormant state. I seldom could prevail on myself to write a letter; an answer of a few words, to any that I received, was the utmost that I could accomplish; and often *that* not until the letter had lain for weeks, or even months, on my writing-table. Without the aid of M——, my whole domestic economy, whatever became of political economy, must have gone into irretrievable confusion. I shall not afterwards allude to this part of the case; it is one, however, which the opium-eater will find, in the end, most oppressive and tormenting, from the sense of incapacity and feebleness, from the direct embarrassments incident to the neglect or procrastination of each day's appropriate labours, and from the remorse which must often exasperate the stings of these evils to a conscientious mind. The opium-eater loses none of his moral sensibilities or aspirations; he wishes and longs as earnestly as ever to realise what he believes possible, and feels to be exacted by duty; but his intellectual apprehension of what is possible infinitely outruns his power, not of execution only, but even of proposing or willing. He lies under a world's weight of incubus and nightmare; he lies in sight of all that he would fain perform, just as a man forcibly confined to his bed by the mortal languor of paralysis, who is compelled to witness injury or outrage offered to some object of his tenderest love:—he would lay down his life if he might but rise and walk; but he is powerless as an infant, and cannot so much as make an effort to move.

But from this I now pass to what is the main subject of these latter Confessions—to the history and journal of what

took place in my dreams ; for these were the immediate and proximate cause of shadowy terrors that settled and brooded over my whole waking life.

The first notice I had of any important change going on in this part of my physical economy, was from the re-awaking of a state of eye oftentimes incident to childhood. I know not whether my reader is aware that many children have a power of painting, as it were, upon the darkness all sorts of phantoms ; in some that power is simply a mechanic affection of the eye ; others have a voluntary or semi-voluntary power to dismiss or summon such phantoms ; or, as a child once said to me, when I questioned him on this matter, " I can tell them to go, and they go ; but sometimes they come when I don't tell them to come." He had by one-half as unlimited a command over apparitions as a Roman centurion over his soldiers. In the middle of 1817 this faculty became increasingly distressing to me : at night, when I lay awake in bed, vast processions moved along continually in mournful pomp ; friezes of never-ending stories, that to my feelings were as sad and solemn as stories drawn from times before *Ædipus* or *Priam*, before *Tyre*, before *Memphis*. And, concurrently with this, a corresponding change took place in my dreams ; a theatre seemed suddenly opened and lighted up within my brain, which presented nightly spectacles of more than earthly splendour. And the four following facts may be mentioned, as noticeable at this time :—

1. That, as the creative state of the eye increased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point—that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams ; and at length I feared to exercise this faculty ; for, as *Midas* turned all things to gold that yet baffled his hopes and defrauded his human desires, so whatsoever things capable of being visually represented I did but think of in the darkness, immediately shaped themselves into phantoms for the eye ; and, by a process apparently no less inevitable, when thus once traced in faint and visionary colours, like writings in sympathetic ink, they were drawn out, by the fierce chemistry of my dreams, into insufferable splendour that fretted my heart.

2. This and all other changes in my dreams were accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and funereal melancholy, such as are wholly incommunicable by words. I seemed

every night to descend—not metaphorically, but literally to descend—into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever re-ascend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I *had* reascended. Why should I dwell upon this? For indeed the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles, amounting at last to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words.

3. The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, etc., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable and self-repeating infinity. This disturbed me very much less than the vast expansion of time. Sometimes I seemed to have lived for seventy or a hundred years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.

4. The minutest incidents of childhood, or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived. I could not be said to recollect them; for, if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But placed as they were before me, in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I *recognised* them instantaneously. I was once told by a near relative of mine, that having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the assistance which reached her at the last critical moment, she saw in a moment her whole life, clothed in its forgotten incidents, arrayed before her as in a mirror, not successively, but simultaneously; and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part.* This, from some opium ex-

* The heroine of this remarkable case was a girl about nine years old; and there can be little doubt that she looked down as far within the *crater* of death—that awful volcano—as any human being ever *can* have done that has lived to draw back and to report her experience. Not less than ninety years did she survive this memorable escape; and I may describe her as in all respects a woman of remarkable and interesting qualities. She enjoyed throughout her long life, as the reader will readily infer, serene and cloudless health; had a masculine understanding; revered truth not less than did the Evangelists; and led a life of saintly devotion, such as might have glorified "*Hilarion or Paul*."—[The words in italic are Ariosto's.] I mention these traits as

periences, I can believe; I have, indeed, seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which probably is true—viz., that the dread book of account, which the Scriptures speak of, is, in fact, the mind itself of each individual. Of this, at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as ultimate *forgetting*; traces once impressed upon the memory are indestructible; a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind. Accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil. But alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever; just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil; and that they are waiting to be revealed,

characterising her in a memorable extent, that the reader may not suppose himself relying upon a dealer in exaggerations, upon a credulous enthusiast, or upon a careless wielder of language. Forty-five years had intervened between the first time and the last time of her telling me this anecdote, and not one iota had shifted its ground amongst the incidents, nor had any the most trivial of the circumstantiations suffered change. The scene of the accident was the least of valleys, what the Greeks of old would have called an *αγκος*, and we English should properly call a dell. Human tenant it had none: even at noonday it was a solitude; and would oftentimes have been a silent solitude but for the brawling of a brook—not broad, but occasionally deep—which ran along the base of the little hills. Into this brook, probably into one of its dangerous pools, the child fell: and, according to the ordinary chances, she could have had but a slender prospect indeed of any deliverance; for, although a dwelling-house was close by, it was shut out from view by the undulations of the ground. How long the child lay in the water, was probably never inquired earnestly until the answer had become irrevocable: for a servant, to whose care the child was then confided, had a natural interest in suppressing the whole case. From the child's own account, it should seem that *asphyxia* must have announced its commencement. A process of struggle and deadly suffocation was passed through half consciously. This process terminated by a sudden blow apparently *on* or *in* the brain; after which there was no pain or conflict; but in an instant succeeded a dazzling rush of light; immediately after which came the solemn apocalypse of the entire past life. Meantime, the child's disappearance in the water had happily been witnessed by a farmer who rented some fields in this little solitude, and by a rare accident was riding through them at the moment. Not being very well mounted, he was retarded by the hedges and other fences in making his way down to the water; some time was thus lost; but once at the spot, he leaped in, booted and spurred, and succeeded in delivering one that must have been as nearly counted amongst the populations of the grave as perhaps the laws of the shadowy world can suffer to return!

whenever the obscuring daylight itself shall have withdrawn.

Having noticed these four facts as memorably distinguishing my dreams from those of health, I shall now cite a few illustrative cases ; and shall then cite such others as I remember, in any order that may give them most effect as pictures to the reader.

I had been in youth, and ever since, for occasional amusement, a great reader of Livy, whom I confess that I prefer, both for style and matter, to any other of the Roman historians ; and I had often felt as solemn and appalling sounds, emphatically representative of Roman majesty, the two words so often occurring in Livy, *Consul Romanus* ; especially when the consul is introduced in his military character. I mean to say, that the words, *king*, *sultan*, *regent*, etc., or any other titles of those who embody in their own persons the collective majesty of a great people, had less power over my reverential feelings. I had also, though no great reader of history, made myself critically familiar with one period of English history—viz., the period of the Parliamentary War—having been attracted by the moral grandeur of some who figured in that day, and by the interesting memoirs which survive those unquiet times. Both these parts of my lighter reading, having furnished me often with matter of reflection, now furnished me with matter for my dreams. Often I used to see, after painting upon the blank darkness a sort of rehearsal whilst waking, a crowd of ladies, and perhaps a festival and dances. And I heard it said, or I said to myself, “ These are English ladies from the unhappy times of Charles I. These are the wives and daughters of those who met in peace, and sat at the same tables, and were allied by marriage or by blood ; and yet, after a certain day in August, 1642,* never smiled upon each other again, nor met but in the field of battle ; and at Marston Moor, at Newbury, or at Naseby, cut asunder all ties of love by

* I think (but at the moment have no means of verifying my conjecture) that this day was the 24th of August. On or about that day Charles raised the royal standard at Nottingham ; which, ominously enough (considering the strength of such superstitions in the seventeenth century, and, amongst the generations of that century, more especially in this particular generation of the Parliamentary War), was blown down during the succeeding night. Let me remark, in passing, that no falsehood can virtually be greater or more malicious, than that which imputes to Archbishop Laud a special or exceptional faith in such mute warnings.

the cruel sabre, and washed away in blood the memory of ancient friendship." The ladies danced, and looked as lovely as the court of George IV. Yet even in my dream I knew that they had been in the grave for nearly two centuries. This pageant would suddenly dissolve; and, at a clapping of hands, would be heard the heart-shaking sound of *Consul Romanus*; and immediately came "sweeping by," in gorgeous paludaments, Paullus or Marius, girt around by a company of centurions, with the crimson tunic * hoisted on a spear, and followed by the *alalagmos* † of the Roman legions.

Many years ago, when I was looking over Piranesi's "Antiquities of Rome," Coleridge, then standing by, described to me a set of plates from that artist, called his "Dreams," and which record the scenery of his own visions during the delirium of a fever. Some of these (I describe only from memory of Coleridge's account) represented vast Gothic halls; on the floor of which stood mighty engines and machinery, wheels, cables, catapults, etc., expressive of enormous power put forth, or resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase; and upon this, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself. Follow the stairs a little farther, and you perceive them reaching an abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who should reach the extremity, except into the depths below. Whatever is to become of poor Piranesi, at least you suppose that his labours must now in some way terminate. But raise your eyes, and behold a second flight of stairs still higher, on which again Piranesi is perceived, by this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Once again elevate your eye, and a still more aerial flight of stairs is descried; and there, again, is the delirious Piranesi, busy on his aspiring labours: and so on, until the unfinished stairs and the hopeless Piranesi both are lost in the upper gloom of the nall. With the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction did my architecture proceed in dreams. In the early stage of the malady, the splendours of my dreams were indeed chiefly architectural; and I beheld such pomp of cities and palaces as never yet was beheld by the waking eye, unless in the clouds. From a great

* "*The crimson tunic*":—The signal which announced a day of battle.

† "*Alalagmos*":—A word expressing collectively the gathering of the Roman war-cries—*Alála, alála*!

modern poet * I cite the part of a passage which describes, as an appearance actually beheld in the clouds, what in many of its circumstances I saw frequently in sleep :—

“ The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
 Was of a mighty city—boldly say
 A wilderness of building, sinking far
 And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,
 Far sinking into splendour without end !
 Fabric it seem’d of diamond and of gold,
 With alabaster domes and silver spires,
 And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
 Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright,
 In avenues disposed ; there towers begirt
 With battlements that on their restless fronts
 Bore stars—illumination of all gems !
 By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
 Upon the dark materials of the storm
 Now pacified ; on them, and on the coves,
 And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
 The vapours had receded—taking there
 Their station under a cerulean sky.”

The sublime circumstance—“ that on their *restless* fronts bore stars ”—might have been copied from my own architectural dreams, so often did it occur. We hear it reported of Dryden, and in later times of Fuseli, that they ate raw meat for the sake of obtaining splendid dreams : how much better, for such a purpose, to have eaten opium, which yet I do not remember that any poet is recorded to have done, except the dramatist Shadwell ; and in ancient days, Homer is, I think, rightly reputed to have known the virtues of opium as a *φάρμακον νηπενθές*—i.e., as an anodyne.

To my architecture succeeded dreams of lakes and silvery expanses of water : these haunted me so much,

* “ *From a great modern poet* ” :—What poet ? It was Wordsworth ; and why did I not formally name him ? This throws a light backwards upon the strange history of Wordsworth’s reputation. The year in which I wrote and published these Confessions was 1821 ; and at that time the name of Wordsworth, though beginning to emerge from the dark cloud of scorn and contumely which had hitherto overshadowed it, was yet most imperfectly established. Not until ten years later was his greatness cheerfully and generally acknowledged. I, therefore, as the very earliest (without one exception) of all who came forward, in the beginning of his career, to honour and welcome him, shrank with disgust from making any sentence of mine the occasion for an explosion of vulgar malice against him. But the grandeur of the passage here cited inevitably spoke for itself ; and he that would have been most scornful on hearing the name of the poet coupled with this epithet of “ great,” could not but find his malice intercepted, and himself cheated into cordial admiration, by the splendour of the verses.

that I feared lest some dropsical state or tendency of the brain might thus be making itself (to use a metaphysical word) *objective*; * and that the sentient organ might be projecting itself as its own object. For two months I suffered greatly in my head—a part of my bodily structure which had hitherto been so clear from all touch or taint of weakness (physically, I mean), that I used to say of it, as the last Lord Orford said of his stomach, that it seemed likely to survive the rest of my person. Till now, I had never felt a headache even, or any the slightest pain, except rheumatic pains caused by my own folly.

The waters gradually changed their character—from translucent lakes, shining like mirrors, they became seas and oceans. And now came a tremendous change, which, unfolding itself slowly like a scroll, through many months, promised an abiding torment; and, in fact, it never left me, though recurring more or less intermittingly. Hitherto the human face had often mixed in my dreams, but not despotically, nor with any special power of tormenting. But now that affection, which I have called the tyranny of the human face, began to unfold itself. Perhaps some part of my London life (the searching for Ann amongst fluctuating crowds) might be answerable for this. Be that as it may, now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to reveal itself; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens; faces, imploring, wrathful, despairing; faces that surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations: infinite was my agitation; my mind tossed, as it seemed, upon the billowy ocean, and weltered upon the weltering waves.

May, 1818.—The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. Every night, through his means, I have been transported into Asiatic scenery. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point; but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forego England, and to live in China, among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human

* "*Objective*":—This word, so nearly unintelligible in 1821, so intensely scholastic, and, consequently, when surrounded by familiar and vernacular words, so apparently pedantic, yet, on the other hand, so indispensable to accurate thinking, and to *wide* thinking, has since 1821 become too common to need any apology.

race, if on no other ground, it would have a dim, reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Hindostan. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, above all, of their mythologies, etc., is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the sanctity of the Ganges, or by the very name of the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings, that South-eastern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life, the great *officina gentium*. Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires, also, into which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of Southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, by the barrier of utter abhorrence placed between myself and *them*, by counter-sympathies deeper than I can analyse. I could sooner live with lunatics, with vermin, with crocodiles or snakes. All this, and much more than I can say, the reader must enter into, before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of oriental imagery and mythological tortures impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Hindostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in

wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of years I lived and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

Some slight abstraction I thus attempt of my oriental dreams, which filled me always with such amazement at the monstrous scenery, that horror seemed absorbed for awhile in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a killing sense of eternity and infinity. Into these dreams only it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles, especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than all the rest. I was compelled to live with him; and (as was always the case in my dreams) for centuries. Sometimes I escaped, and found myself in Chinese houses. All the feet of the tables, sofas, etc., soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into ten thousand repetitions; and I stood loathing and fascinated. So often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams, that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way: I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awoke; it was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside, come to show me their coloured shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. No experience was so awful to me, and at the same time so pathetic, as this abrupt translation from the darkness of the infinite to the gaudy summer air of highest noon, and from the unutterable abortions of miscreated gigantic vermin to the sight of infancy, and innocent *human* natures.

June, 1819.—I have had occasion to remark, at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love, and, indeed, the contemplation of death generally, is

(*cæteris paribus*) more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think : first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and (if such a solecism may be excused) more infinite ; the clouds by which chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads are in summer more voluminous, more massed, and are accumulated in far grander and more towering piles ; secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the infinite ; and, thirdly (which is the main reason), the exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed generally, that wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it impossible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone in the endless days of summer ; and any particular death, if not actually more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly, in that season. Perhaps this cause, and a slight incident which I omit, might have been the immediate occasions of the following dream, to which, however, a predisposition must always have existed in my mind ; but, having been once roused, it never left me, and split into a thousand fantastic variations, which often suddenly re-combined ; locked back into startling unity, and restored the original dream.

I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May ; that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnised by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet ; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of savannahs and forest lawns ; the hedges were rich with white roses ; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the great churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had once tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a

little before sunrise, in the same summer when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said to myself, "It yet wants much of sunrise; and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first-fruits of Resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day; for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the churchyard is as verdant as the forest lawns, and the forest lawns are as quiet as the churchyard; and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead; and then I shall be unhappy no longer." I turned, as if to open my garden gate, and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different; but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony. The scene was an oriental one; and there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city—an image or faint abstraction, caught perhaps in childhood from some picture of Jerusalem. And not a bow-shot from me, upon a stone, shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman; and I looked, and it was—Ann! She fixed her eyes upon me earnestly; and I said to her at length, "So, then, I have found you at last." I waited; but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last; the same; and yet, again, how different! Seventeen years ago, when the lamp-light of mighty London fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips (lips, Ann, that to me were not polluted!), her eyes were streaming with tears. The tears were now no longer seen. Sometimes she seemed altered; yet again sometimes *not* altered; and hardly older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression, and I now gazed upon her with some awe. Suddenly her countenance grew dim; and, turning to the mountains, I perceived vapours rolling between us; in a moment all had vanished; thick darkness came on; and in the twinkling of an eye I was far away from mountains, and by lamplight in London, walking again with Ann—just as we had walked, when both children, eighteen years before, along the endless terraces of Oxford Street.

Then suddenly would come a dream of far different character—a tumultuous dream—commencing with a music such as now I often heard in sleep—music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation

Anthem ; and, like *that*, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where—somehow, but I knew not how—by some beings, but I knew not by whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was travelling through all its stages—was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable, from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its cause, its nature, and its undecipherable issue. I (as is usual in dreams where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it ; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpressible guilt. “ Deeper than ever plummet sounded,” I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms ; hurrying to and fro, trepidations of innumerable fugitives ; I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad ; darkness and lights ; tempest and human faces ; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me ; and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, with heart-breakings partings, and then—everlasting farewells ! and, with a sigh such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells ! and again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells !

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, “ I will sleep no more ! ”

Now, at last, I had become awestruck at the approach of sleep, under the conditions of visions so afflicting, and so intensely life-like as those which persecuted my phantom-haunted brain. More and more also I felt violent palpitations in some internal region, such as are commonly, but erroneously, called palpitations of the heart—being, as I suppose, referable exclusively to derangements in the stomach. These were evidently increasing rapidly in frequency and in strength. Naturally, therefore, on con-

sidering how important my life had become to others besides myself, I became alarmed ; and I paused seasonably ; but with a difficulty that is past all description. Either way it seemed as though death had, in military language, " thrown himself astride of my path." Nothing short of mortal anguish, in a physical sense, it seemed, to wean myself from opium ; yet, on the other hand, death through overwhelming nervous terrors—death by brain-fever or by lunacy—seemed too certainly to besiege the alternative course. Fortunately I had still so much of firmness left as to face that choice, which, with most of instant suffering, showed in the far distance a possibility of final escape.

This possibility was realised : I *did* accomplish my escape. And the issue of that particular stage in my opium experiences (for such it was—simply a provisional stage, that paved the way subsequently for many milder stages, to which gradually my constitutional system accommodated itself) was pretty nearly in the following words, communicated to my readers in the earliest edition of these Confessions :—

I triumphed. But infer not, reader, from this word "*triumphed*," a condition of joy or exultation. Think of me as of one, even when four months had passed, still agitated, writhing, throbbing, palpitating, shattered ; and much, perhaps, in the situation of him who has been racked, as I collect the torments of that state from the affecting account of them left by a most innocent sufferer* (in the time of James I.). Meantime, I derived no benefit from any medicine whatever, except ammoniated tincture of valerian. The moral of the narrative is addressed to the opium-eater ; and therefore, of necessity, limited in its application. If he is taught to fear and tremble, enough has been effected. But he may say that the issue of my case is at least a proof that opium, after an eighteen years' use, and an eight years' abuse of its powers, may still be renounced ; and that he may chance to bring to the task greater energy than I did, or that, with a stronger constitution, he may obtain the same results with less. This may be true ; I would not presume to measure the efforts of other men by my own. Heartily I wish him more re-

* William Lithgow. His book (Travels, etc.,) is tedious and not well written ; but the account of his own sufferings on the rack at Malaga, and subsequently, is overpoweringly affecting. Less circumstantial, but the same in tendency, is the report of the results from torture published in 1830 by Juan Van Halen.

solution ; heartily I wish him an equal success. Nevertheless, I had motives external to myself which he may unfortunately want ; and these supplied me with conscientious supports, such as merely selfish interests might fail in supplying to a mind debilitated by opium.

Lord Bacon * conjectures that it may be as painful to be born as to die. That seems probable ; and, during the whole period of diminishing the opium, I had the torments of a man passing out of one mode of existence into another, and liable to the mixed or the alternate pains of birth and death. The issue was not death, but a sort of physical regeneration ; and I may add, that ever since, at intervals, I have had a restoration of more than youthful spirits.

One memorial of my former condition nevertheless remains : my dreams are not calm ; the dread swell and agitation of the storm have not wholly subsided ; the legions that encamped in them are drawing off, but not departed ; my sleep is still tumultuous ; and, like the gates of Paradise to our first parents when looking back from afar, it is still (in the tremendous line of Milton)

“ With dreadful faces throng’d and fiery arms.”

* In all former editions, I had ascribed this sentiment to Jeremy Taylor. On a close search, however, wishing to verify the quotation, it appeared that I had been mistaken. Something very like it occurs more than once in the bishop’s voluminous writings : but the exact passage moving in my mind had evidently been this which follows, from Lord Bacon’s “ Essay on Death ” :—“ It is as natural to die as to be born ; and to a little infant perhaps the one is as painful as the other.”

APPENDIX

DE QUINCEY.—Page 78

THIS family, which split (or, as a grammatical purist lately said to me, in a tone of expostulation, *splat*) into three national divisions—English, French, and American—originally was Norwegian: and in the year of our Christian era *one thousand* spoke (I believe) the most undeniable Norse. Throughout the eleventh century, the heads of this family (in common with all the ruffians and martial vagabonds of Europe, that had Venetian sequins enough disposable for such a trip) held themselves in readiness to join any *likely* leader; and did join William the Norman. Very few indeed, or probably none, of his brigands were Frenchmen, or native Neustrians; Normans being notoriously a name not derived *from* any French province, but imported *into* that province by trans-Baltic, and in a smaller proportion by cis-Baltic aliens. This Norwegian family, having assumed a territorial denomination from the district or village of Quincy, in the province now called Normandy, transplanted themselves to England: where, and subsequently by marriage in Scotland, they ascended to the highest rank in both kingdoms, and held the highest offices open to a subject. A late distinguished writer, Mr. Moir of Musselburgh, the *Delta* of "Blackwood's Magazine," took the trouble (which must have been considerable) of tracing their aspiring movements in Scotland, through a period when Normans transferred themselves from England to Scotland in considerable numbers, and with great advantages. This elaborate paper, published many years ago in "Blackwood's Magazine," first made known the leading facts of their career in Scotland. Meantime in England they continued to flourish through nine or ten generations; took a distinguished part in one, at least, of the Crusades; and a still more perilous share in the Barons' Wars under Henry III. No family drank more deeply or more frequently from the cup of treason, which in those days was not always a very grave offence in people who having much territorial influence had also much money. But happening to drink once too often, or taking too long a "pull" at the cup, the Earls of Winchester suddenly came to grief. Amongst the romances of astronomy, there is one I believe which has endeavoured to account for the little asteroids of our system, by supposing them fragments of some great planet that had, under internal convulsion or external collision, at some period suddenly exploded. In our own planet Tellus, such a county as York, under a similar catastrophe, would make a very pretty little asteroid. And, with some miniature resemblance to such a case, sometimes benefiting by the indulgence of the crown, sometimes by legal devices, sometimes by aid of matrimonial alliances, numerous descendants, confessedly innocent, from the guilty earl, projected them-

selves by successive efforts, patiently watching their opportunities, from the smoking ruins of the great feudal house : stealthily through two generations creeping out of their lurking holes ; timidly, when the great shadows from the threatening throne had passed over, re-assuming the family name. Concurrently with these *personal* fragments projected from the ancient house flew off random splinters and fragments from the great planetary disk of the Winchester estates, little asteroids that formed ample inheritances for the wants of this or that provincial squire, of this or that tame villatic squireen.*

The kingly old oak, that had been the leader of the forest, was thus suddenly (in the technical language of wood-craft) cut down into a "pollard." This mutilation for ever prevented it from aspiring cloudwards by means of some mighty stem, such as grows upon Norwegian hills, fit to be the mast of "some great ammiral." Nevertheless, we see daily amongst the realities of nature, that a tree, after passing through such a process of degradation, yet manifests the great arrears of vindictive life lurking within it, by throwing out a huge radiation of slender boughs and miniature shoots, small but many, so that we are forced exactly to invert the fine words of Lucan, saying no longer, *trunco, non frondibus efficit umbram*, but, on the contrary, *non trunco sed frondibus efficit umbram*. This great cabbage-head of this ancient human tree threw a broad massy umbrage over more villages than one ; sometimes yielding representatives moody and mutinous, sometimes vivacious and inventive, sometimes dull and lethargic, until at last, one fine morning, on rubbing their eyes, they found themselves actually in the sixteenth century abreast of Henry VIII. and his fiery children. Ah, what a century was that ! Sculptured as only Froude can sculpture those that fight across the chasms of eternity, grouped as only Froude can group the mighty factions, acting or suffering, arraigning before chanceries of man, or protesting before chanceries of God—what vast arrays of marble gladiators fighting for truth, real or imagined, throng the arenas in each generation of that and the succeeding century. And how ennobling a distinction of modern humanity, that in Pagan antiquity no truth as yet existed, none had been revealed, none emblazoned, on behalf of which man *could* have fought ! As Lord Bacon remarks—though strangely, indeed, publishing in the very terms of this remark his own blindness to the causes and consequences—religious wars were unknown to antiquity. Personal interests, and those only, did or could furnish a subject of conflict. But throughout the sixteenth century, whether in England, in France, or in Germany, it was a spiritual interest, shadowy and aerial, which embattled armies against armies. Simply the nobility of this interest it was, simply the grandeur of a cause moving by springs transcendent to all vulgar and mercenary collisions of prince with prince, or family with family, that arrayed man against man, not upon petty combinations of personal intrigue, but upon questions of everlasting concern—this majestic principle of the strife it was that constituted for the noblest minds its secret magnetism. Early in the seventeenth century, when it seemed likely that the interests of

* This last variety of the rustic *regulus* is of Hibernian origin ; and as regards the name, was unknown to us in England until Miss Edgeworth had extended the horizon of our social experience. Yet, without the name, I presume that the thing must have been known occasionally even in England.

a particular family would be entangled with the principles at issue, multitudes become anxious to evade the strife by retiring to the asylum of forests. Amongst these was one branch of the De Quinceys. Enamoured of democracy, this family, laying aside the aristocratic *De* attached to their name, settled in New England, where they subsequently rose, through long public services, to the highest moral rank—as measured by all possible expressions of public esteem that are consistent with the simplicities of the great republic. Mr. Josiah Quincy, as head of this distinguished family, is appealed to as one who takes rank by age and large political experience with the founders of the American Union. Another branch of the same family had at a much earlier period settled in France. Finally, the squires and squireens—i.e., those who benefited in any degree by those “asteroids” which I have explained as exploded from the ruins of the Winchester estates—naturally remained in England. The last of them who enjoyed any relics whatever of that ancient territorial domain, was an elder kinsman of my father. I never had the honour of seeing him; in fact, it was impossible that I *should* have such an honour, since he died during the American War, which war had closed, although it had not paid its bills, some time before my birth. He enacted the part of squireen, I have been told, creditably enough in a village belonging either to the county of Leicester, Nottingham, or Rutland. Sir Andrew Aguecheek observes, as one of his sentimental remembrances, that he also at one period of his life had been “adored”: “I was adored once,” says the knight, seeming to acknowledge that he was not adored then. But the squireen was “adored” in a limited way to the last. This fading representative of a crusading house declined gradually into the oracle of the bar at the Red Lion; and was adored by two persons at the least (not counting himself)—viz., the landlord, and occasionally the waiter. Mortgages had eaten up the last vestiges of the old territorial wrecks; and with his death a new era commenced for this historical family, which now (as if expressly to irritate its ambition) finds itself distributed amongst three mighty nations—France, America, and England—and precisely those three that are usually regarded as the leaders of civilisation.*

BARBARA LEWTHWAITE.—Page 185

Already Barbara Lewthwaite had contributed to the composition of two impressive pictures—first, in her infancy, with her pet lamb, under the evening shadows of the mighty Fairfield; secondly, in her girlhood, with the turbaned Malay and the little cottage child. But subsequently, when a young woman, she entered unconsciously into the composition of another picture even more rememberable, suggesting great names, connected with the greatest of themes; the names being those of Plato, and, in this instance at least, of a mightier than Plato—viz., William Wordsworth; and the theme concerned being that problem which, measured by its

* The omission of the *De*, as an addition looking better at a tournament than as an indorsement on a bill of exchange, began, as to many hundreds of English names, full three hundred years ago. Many English families have disused this affix simply from indolence. As to the terminal variations, *cy*, *cie*, *cey*, those belong, as natural and inevitable exponents of a transitional condition, to the unsettled spelling that characterises the early stages of literature in all countries alike.

interest to man, by its dependencies, by the infinite jewel staked upon the verdict—we should all confess to be the most solemn and heart-shaking that is hung out by golden chains from the heaven of heavens to human investigation—viz., Is the spirit of man numbered amongst things naturally perishable? The doctrine of our own Dodwell (a most orthodox man) was—that naturally and *per se* it was perishable, but that by supernatural endowment it was made immortal. Apparently the ancient oracles of the Hebrew literature had all and everywhere assumed the soul's natural mortality. The single passage in Job, that seemed to look in the counter direction, has long since received an interpretation painfully alien from such a meaning; not to mention that the same objection would apply to this passage, if read into a Christian sense, as applies to the ridiculous interpolation in Josephus describing Christ's personal appearance—viz., Once suppose it genuine, and why were there not myriads of other passages in the same key? Imagine, for a moment, the writer so penetrated with premature Christian views, by what inexplicable rigour of abstinence had he forborne to meet ten thousand calls, at other turns of his work, for similar utterances of Christian sentiment? It must not be supposed that the objections to this Christian interpretation of Job rest solely with German scholars. Coleridge, one of the most devout and evangelical amongst modern theologians, took the same view; and has expressed it with decision. But Job is of slight importance in comparison with Moses. Now Warburton, in his well-known argument, held—not only that Moses *did* (as a fact) assume the mortality of the soul, but that, as a necessity, he did so, since upon this assumption rests the weightiest argument for his own divine mission. That Moses could dispense with a support which Warburton fancied all other legislators had needed and postulated, argued, in the bishop's opinion, a vicarious support—a secret and divine support. This extreme view will be rejected, perhaps, by most people. But, in the meantime, the very existence of such a sect as the Sadducees proves sufficiently that no positive affirmation of the soul's immortality could have been accredited amongst the Hebrew nation as a Mosaic doctrine. The rise of a counter sect, the Pharisees, occurred in later days, clearly under a principle of "development" applied to old traditions current among the Jews. It was not alleged as a Mosaic doctrine, but as something deducible from traditions countenanced by Moses. From Hebrew literature, therefore, no help is to be looked for on this great question. Pagan literature first of all furnishes any response upon it favourable to human yearnings. But, unhappily, the main argument upon which the sophist in the *Phædo* relies, is a pure scholastic conundrum, baseless and puerile. The homogeneity of human consciousness, upon which is made to rest its indestructibility, is not established or made probable by any plausible logic. If we should figure to ourselves some mighty angel mounting guard upon human interests twenty-three centuries ago, this tutelary spirit would have smiled derisively upon the advent and the departure of Plato. At length, once again, after many centuries, was heard the clarion of immortality—not as of any preternatural gift, but as a natural prerogative of the human spirit. This time the angel would have paused and hearkened. The auguries for immortality, which Wordsworth drew from indications running along the line of daily human experience, were two. The

first was involved in the exquisite little poem of "We are Seven." That authentic voice, said Wordsworth, which affirmed life as a necessity inalienable from man's consciousness, was a revelation through the lips of childhood. Life in its torrent fulness—that is, life in its earliest stage—affirmed itself; whereas the voice which whispered doubts was an adventitious and secondary voice consequent upon an earthly experience. The child in this little poem is unable to admit the thought of death, though, in compliance with custom, she uses the word.

"The first that *died* was little Jane;
In bed she moaning lay;
Till God released her from her pain,
And then she went away."

The graves of her brother and sister she is so far from regarding as any argument of their having died, that she supposes the stranger simply to doubt her statement, and she reiterates her assertion of their graves as lying in the churchyard, in order to prove that they were *living* :—

" 'Their graves are green, they may be seen,'
The little maid replied,
Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.
And often after sunset, sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.
My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon their graves I sit—
I sit, and sing to them.' "

The other argument was developed in the sublime "Ode upon the intimations of Immortality," etc. Man in his infancy stood *nearest* (so much was matter of fact) to the unseen world of the Infinite. What voices he heard most frequently, murmuring through the cells of his infantine brain, were echoes of the great realities which, as a new-born infant, he had just quitted. Hanging upon his mother's breast, he heard dim prolongations of a music which belonged to a life ever more and more receding into a distance buried in clouds and vapours. Man's orient, in which lie the fountains of the dawn, must be sought for in that Eden of infancy which first received him as a traveller emerging from a world now daily becoming more distant. And it is a great argument of the divine splendour investing man's natural home—that the heavenly lights which burned in his morning grow fainter and fainter as he "travels farther from the East."

The little Carnarvonshire child in "We are Seven," who is represented as repelling the idea of death under an absolute inability to receive it, had completed her eighth year. But this might be an ambitious exaggeration, such as aspiring female children are generally disposed to practise. It is more probable that she might be in the currency of her eighth year. Naturally we must not exact from Wordsworth any pedantic rigour of accuracy in such a case: but assuredly we have a right to presume that his principle, if

tenable at all, must apply to all children below the age of *five*. However, I will say *four*. In that case the following anecdote seems to impeach the philosophic truth of this doctrine. I give the memorandum as it was drawn up by myself at the time :—

My second child, but eldest daughter, little M——, is between two and three weeks less than two years old : and from the day of her birth she has been uniformly attended by Barbara Lewthwaite. We are now in the first days of June ; but about three weeks since, consequently in the earlier half of May, some one of our neighbours gave to M—— a little bird. I am no great ornithologist. “ Perhaps only a tenth-rate one,” says some too flattering reader. Oh dear, no, nothing near it : I fear, no more than a 510th rater. Consequently, I cannot ornithologically describe or classify the bird. But I believe that it belonged to the family of finches—either a goldfinch, bullfinch, or at least something ending in *inch*. The present was less splendid than at first it seemed. For the bird was wounded ; though not in a way that made the wound apparent ; and too sensibly as the evening wore away it drooped. None of us knew what medical treatment to suggest ; and all that occurred was to place it with free access to bird seed and water. At length sunset arrived, which was the signal for M——’s departure to bed. She came therefore as usual to me, threw her arms round my neck, and went through her ordinary routine of prayers—viz., first, the Lord’s Prayer, and finally the four following lines (a Roman Catholic bequest to the children of Northern England) :—

Holy * Jesus, meek and mild,
Look on me, a little child :
Pity my simplicity ;
Grant that I may come to thee.”

M——, as she was moving off to bed, whispered to me that I was to “ mend ” the bird with “ yoddonum.” Having always seen *me* taking laudanum, and for the purpose (as she was told) of growing better in health, reasonably it struck her that the little bird would improve under the same regimen. For her satisfaction, I placed a little diluted laudanum near to the bird ; and she then departed to bed, though with uneasy looks reverting to her sick little pet. Occupied with some point of study, it happened that I sat up through the whole night : and long before seven o’clock in the morning she had summoned Barbara to dress her, and soon I heard the impatient little foot descending the stairs to my study. I had such a Jesuitical *bulletin* ready, by way of a report upon the bird’s health, as might not seem absolutely despairing, though not too dangerously sanguine. And as the morning was one of heavenly splendour, I proposed that we should improve the bird’s chances by taking it out of doors into the little orchard at the foot of Fairfield—our loftiest Grasmere mountain. Thither moved at once Barbara Lewthwaite, little M——, myself, and the poor languishing bird. By that time in May, in any far southern county, perhaps the birds would be ceasing to sing ; but not so with us dilatory

* “ *Holy Jesus* ” :—This was a very judicious correction introduced by Wordsworth. Originally the traditional line had stood—“ Gentle Jesus, meek and mild.” But Wordsworth, offended by the idle iteration of one idea in the words, gentle, meek, mild, corrected the text into *Holy*.

people in Westmoreland. Suddenly, as we all stood around the little perch on which the bird rested, one thrilling song, louder than the rest, arose from a neighbouring hedge. Immediately the bird's eye, previously dull, kindled into momentary fire: the bird rose on its perch, struggled for an instant, seemed to be expanding its wings, made one aspiring movement upwards, in doing so fell back, and in another moment was dead. Too certainly and apparently all these transitions symbolically interpreted themselves, and to all of us alike: the proof of which was—that man, woman, and child spontaneously shed tears: a weakness, perhaps, but more natural under the regular processional evolution of the scenical stages, than when simply read as a narrative: for too evident it was, to one and all of us, without needing to communicate by words, *what* vision had revealed itself to all alike—to the child under two years old, not less than to the adults: too evident it was, that, on this magnificent May morning, there had been exhibited, as on the stage of a theatre; there had passed before the eyes of us all—passed, and was finished—the everlasting mystery of death! It seemed to me that little M——, by her sudden burst of tears, must have read this saddest of truths—must have felt that the bird's fate was sealed—not less clearly than Barbara or myself.

THE APPENDIX TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE CONFESSIONS IN BOOK FORM IN 1822

The Proprietors of this little work having determined on reprinting it, some explanation seems called for, to account for the non-appearance of a Third Part promised in the "London Magazine" of December last; and the more so because the proprietors, under whose guarantee that promise was issued, might otherwise be implicated in the blame—little or much—attached to its non-fulfilment. This blame, in mere justice, the author takes wholly upon himself. What may be the exact amount of the guilt which he thus appropriates is a very dark question to his own judgment, and not much illuminated by any of the masters on casuistry whom he has consulted on the occasion. On the one hand, it seems generally agreed that a promise is binding in the *inverse* ratio of the numbers to whom it is made: for which reason it is that we see many persons break promises without scruple that are made to a whole nation who keep their faith religiously in all private engagements—breaches of promise towards the stronger party being committed at a man's own peril. On the other hand, the only parties interested in the promises of an author are his readers; and these it is a point of modesty in any author to believe as few as possible; or perhaps only one—in which case any promise imposes a sanctity of moral obligation which it is shocking to think of. Casuistry dismissed, however, the author throws himself on the indulgent consideration of all who may conceive themselves aggrieved by his delay, in the following account of his own condition from the end of last year, when the engagement was made, up nearly to the present time. For any purpose of self-excuse, it might be sufficient to say that intolerable bodily suffering had totally disabled him for almost any exertion of mind, more especially for such as demand and presuppose a pleasurable and a genial

state of feeling ; but, as a case that may by possibility contribute a trifle to the medical history of opium in a further stage of its action than can often have been brought under the notice of professional men, he has judged that it might be acceptable to some readers to have it described more at length. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili* is a just rule where there is any reasonable presumption of benefit to arise on a large scale. What the benefit may be will admit of a doubt ; but there can be none as to the value of the body : for a more worthless body than his own, the author is free to confess, cannot be. It is his pride to believe that it is the very ideal of a base, crazy, despicable human system, that hardly ever could have been meant to be sea-worthy for two days under the ordinary storms and wear-and-tear of life : and, indeed, if that were the creditable way of disposing of human bodies, he must own that he should almost be ashamed to bequeath his wretched structure to any respectable dog. But now to the case ; which, for the sake of avoiding the constant recurrence of a cumbersome periphrasis, the author will take the liberty of giving in the first person.

Those who have read the Confessions will have closed them with the impression that I had wholly renounced the use of opium. This impression I meant to convey, and that for two reasons : first, because the very act of deliberately recording such a state of suffering necessarily presumes in the recorder a power of surveying his own case as a cool spectator, and a degree of spirits for adequately describing it, which it would be inconsistent to suppose in any person speaking from the station of an actual sufferer : secondly, because I, who had descended from so large a quantity as 8000 drops to so small a one (comparatively speaking) as a quantity ranging between 300 and 160 drops, might well suppose that the victory was in effect achieved. In suffering my readers, therefore, to think of me as of a reformed opium-eater, I left no impression but what I shared myself ; and, as may be seen, even this impression was left to be collected from the general tone of the conclusion, and not from any specific words—which are in no instance at variance with the literal truth. In no long time after that paper was written, I became sensible that the effort which remained would cost me far more energy than I had anticipated ; and the necessity for making it was more apparent every month. In particular, I became aware of an increasing callousness or defect of sensibility in the stomach ; and this I imagined might imply a scirrhus state of that organ, either formed or forming. An eminent physician, to whose kindness I was at that time deeply indebted, informed me that such a termination of my case was not impossible, though likely to be forestalled by a different termination, in the event of my continuing the use of opium. Opium, therefore, I resolved wholly to abjure, as soon as I should find myself at liberty to bend my undivided attention and energy to this purpose. It was not, however, until the 24th of June last that any tolerable concurrence of facilities for such an attempt arrived. On that day I began my experiment, having previously settled in my own mind that I would not flinch, but would “stand up to the scratch,” under any possible “punishment.” I must premise that about 170 or 180 drops had been my ordinary allowance for many months. Occasionally I had run up as high as 500, and once nearly to 700.

In repeated preludes to my final experiment I had also gone as low as 100 drops, but had found it impossible to stand it beyond the fourth day—which, by the way, I have always found more difficult to get over than any of the preceding three. I went off under easy sail—130 drops a day for three days: on the fourth I plunged at once to 80. The misery which I now suffered “took the conceit” out of me at once; and for about a month I continued off and on about this mark: then I sunk to 60, and the next day to—none at all. This was the first day for nearly ten years that I had existed without opium. I persevered in my abstinence for ninety hours; that is, upwards of half a week. Then I took — ask me not how much: say, ye severest, what would ye have done? Then I abstained again: then took about 25 drops; then abstained; and so on.

Meantime the symptoms which attended my case for the first six weeks of the experiment were these: enormous irritability and excitement of the whole system; the stomach, in particular, restored to a full feeling of vitality and sensibility, but often in great pain; unceasing restlessness night and day: sleep—I scarcely knew what it was: three hours out of the twenty-four was the utmost I had, and that so agitated and shallow that I heard every sound that was near me: lower jaw constantly swelling: mouth ulcerated: and many other distressing symptoms that would be tedious to repeat; amongst which, however, I must mention one, because it had never failed to accompany any attempt to renounce opium—viz., violent sternutation. This now became exceedingly troublesome; sometimes lasting for two hours at once, and recurring at least twice or three times a-day. I was not much surprised at this, on recollecting what I had somewhere heard or read that the membrane which lines the nostrils is a prolongation of that which lines the stomach; whence, I believe, are explained the inflammatory appearances about the nostrils of dram-drinkers. The sudden restoration of its original sensibility to the stomach expressed itself, I suppose, in this way. It is remarkable also that, during the whole period of years through which I had taken opium, I had never once caught cold (as the phrase is), nor even the slightest cough. But now a violent cold attacked me, and a cough soon after. In an unfinished fragment of a letter begun about this time to —, I find these words: “You ask me to write the — —. Do you know Beaumont and Fletcher’s play of Thierry and Theodoret? There you will see my case as to sleep; nor is it much of an exaggeration in other features. I protest to you that I have a greater influx of thoughts in one hour at present than in a whole year under the reign of opium. It seems as though all the thoughts which had been frozen up for a decade of years by opium had now, according to the old fable, been thawed at once, such a multitude stream in upon me from all quarters. Yet such is my impatience and hideous irritability that, for one which I detain and write down, fifty escape me. In spite of my weariness from suffering and want of sleep, I cannot stand still or sit for two minutes together. ‘*I nunc, et versus tecum meditare canoros.*’”

At this stage of my experiment I sent to a neighbouring surgeon, requesting that he would come over to see me. In the evening he came; and, after briefly stating the case to him, I asked this question: Whether he did not think that the opium might have acted as a stimulous to the digestive organs, and that the present state of suffering in the stomach, which manifestly was the cause

of the inability to sleep, might arise from indigestion? His answer was—No: on the contrary, he thought that the suffering was caused by digestion itself—which should naturally go on below the consciousness, but which, from the unnatural state of the stomach, vitiated by so long a use of opium, was become distinctly perceptible. This opinion was plausible; and the unintermitting nature of the suffering disposes me to think that it was true; for, if it had been any mere *irregular* affection of the stomach, it should naturally have intermitted occasionally, and constantly fluctuated as to degree. The intention of nature, as manifested in the healthy state, obviously is to withdraw from our notice all the vital motions, such as the circulation of the blood, the expansion and contraction of the lungs, the peristaltic action of the stomach, etc.; and opium, it seems, is able in this, as in other instances, to counteract her purposes. By the advice of the surgeon, I tried *bitters*. For a short time these greatly mitigated the feelings under which I laboured; but about the forty-second day of the experiment the symptoms already noticed began to retire, and new ones to arise of a different and far more tormenting class: under these, with but a few intervals of remission, I have since continued to suffer. But I dismiss them undescribed for two reasons: first, because the mind revolts from retracing circumstantially any sufferings from which it is removed by too short or by no interval: to do this with minuteness enough to make the review of any use would be indeed “*infandum renovare dolorem*,” and possibly without a sufficient motive: for, secondly, I doubt whether this latter state be any way referable to opium, positively considered, or even negatively; that is, whether it is to be numbered amongst the last evils from the direct action of opium, or even amongst the earliest evils consequent upon a *want* of opium in a system long deranged by its use. Certainly one part of the symptoms might be accounted for from the time of year (August); for, though the summer was not a hot one, yet in any case the sum of all the heat *funded* (if one may say so) during the previous months, added to the existing heat of that month, naturally renders August in its better half the hottest part of the year; and it so happened that the excessive perspiration which even at Christmas attends any great reduction in the daily quantum of opium, and which in July was so violent as to oblige me to use a bath five or six times a day, had about the setting in of the hottest season wholly retired: on which account any bad effect of the heat might be the more unmitigated. Another symptom, viz., what in my ignorance I call internal rheumatism (sometimes affecting the shoulders, etc., but more often appearing to be seated in the stomach), seemed again less probably attributable to the opium or the want of opium than to the dampness of the house which I inhabit,* which had about that time attained its maximum,—July having been, as usual, a month of incessant rain in our most rainy part of England.

Under these reasons for doubting whether opium had any connection with the latter stage of my bodily wretchedness,—(except,

* In saying this I meant no disrespect to the individual house, as the reader will understand when I tell him that, with the exception of one or two princely mansions, and some few inferior ones that have been coated with Roman cement, I am not acquainted with any house in this mountainous district which is wholly waterproof. The architecture of books, I flatter myself, is conducted on just principles in this country; but for any other architecture it is in a barbarous state, and, what is worse, in a retrograde state.

indeed, as an occasional cause, as having left the body weaker and more crazy, and thus predisposed to any mal influence whatever),—I willingly spare my reader all description of it. Let it perish to him; and would that I could as easily say let it perish to my own remembrances, that any future hours of tranquillity may not be disturbed by too vivid an ideal of possible human misery!

So much for the sequel of my experiment; as to the former stage, in which properly lies the experiment and its application to other cases, I must request my reader not to forget the reasons for which I have recorded it. These were two: first, a belief that I might add some trifle to the history of opium as a medical agent. In this I am aware that I have not at all fulfilled my own intentions, in consequence of the torpor of mind, pain of body, and extreme disgust to the subject, which besieged me whilst writing that part of my paper; which part, being immediately sent off to the press (distant about five degrees of latitude), cannot be corrected or improved. But from this account, rambling as it may be, it is evident that thus much of benefit may arise to the persons most interested in such a history of opium,—namely, to opium-eaters in general,—that it establishes, for their consolation and encouragement, the fact that opium may be renounced, and without greater sufferings, than an ordinary resolution may support; and by a pretty rapid course of descent.*

* On which last notice I would remark that mine was too rapid, and the suffering therefore needlessly aggravated; or rather, perhaps, it was not sufficiently continuous and equably graduated. But, that the reader may judge for himself, and, above all, that the opium-eater who is preparing to retire from business may have every sort of information before him, I subjoin my diary.

FIRST WEEK.

		Drops of Laud.
Mond. June 24	.	180
" 25	.	140
" 26	.	130
" 27	.	80
" 28	.	80
" 29	.	80
" 30	.	80

SECOND WEEK.

		Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 1	.	80
" 2	.	80
" 3	.	90
" 4	.	100
" 5	.	80
" 6	.	80
" 7	.	80

THIRD WEEK.

		Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 8	.	800
" 9	.	50
" 10	.	Hiatus in MS.
" 11	.	
" 12	.	
" 13	.	
" 14	.	70

FOURTH WEEK.

		Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 15	.	76
" 16	.	73½
" 17	.	73½
" 18	.	70
" 19	.	240
" 20	.	80
" 21	.	350

FIFTH WEEK.

		Drops of Laud.
Mond. July 22	.	80
" 23	.	none
" 24	.	none
" 25	.	none
" 26	.	200
" 27	.	none

What mean these abrupt relapses, the reader will ask, perhaps, to such numbers as 800, 850, etc.? The impulse to these relapses was mere infirmity of purpose: the motive, where any motive blended with this impulse, was either the principle of "*reculer pour mieux sauter*"—(for under the torpor of a large dose, which lasted for a day or two, a less quantity satisfied the stomach, which, on awaking, found itself partly accustomed to this new ration)—or else it was this principle—that of sufferings otherwise equal those will be borne best which meet with a mood of anger: now, whenever I ascended to any large dose, I was furiously incensed on the following day, and could then have borne anything.

To communicate this result of my experiment was my foremost purpose. Secondly, as a purpose collateral to this, I wished to explain how it had become impossible for me to compose a Third Part in time to accompany this republication : for during the very time of this experiment the proof-sheets of this reprint were sent to me from London ; and such was my inability to expand or to improve them that I could not even bear to read them over with attention enough to notice the press errors, or to correct any verbal inaccuracies. These were my reasons for troubling my reader with any record, long or short, of experiments relating to so truly base a subject as my own body ; and I am earnest with the reader, that he will not forget them, or so far misapprehend me as to believe it possible that I would condescend to so rascally a subject for its own sake, or, indeed, for any less object than that of general benefit to others. Such an animal as the self-observing valetudinarian I know there is : I have met him myself occasionally ; and I know that he is the worst imaginable *heautontimoroumenos* ; aggravating and sustaining, by calling into distinct consciousness, every symptom that would else perhaps, under a different direction given to the thoughts, become evanescent. But, as to myself, so profound is my contempt for this undignified and selfish habit that I could as little condescend to it as I could to spend my time in watching a poor servant-girl, to whom at this moment I hear some lad or other making love at the back of my house. Is it for a Transcendental Philosopher to feel any curiosity on such an occasion ? Or can I, whose life is worth only eight and a-half years' purchase, be supposed to have leisure for such trivial employments ? However, to put this out of question, I shall say one thing which will, perhaps, shock some readers ; but I am sure it ought not to do so, considering the motives on which I say it. No man, I suppose, employs much of his time on the phenomena of his own body without some regard for it ; whereas the reader sees that, so far from looking upon mine with any complacency or regard, I hate it and make it the object of my bitter ridicule and contempt ; and I should not be displeased to know that the last indignities which the law inflicts upon the bodies of the worst malefactors might hereafter fall upon it. And, in testimony of my sincerity in saying this, I shall make the following offer. Like other men, I have particular fancies about the place of my burial : having lived chiefly in a mountainous region, I rather cleave to the conceit that a grave in a green church-yard amongst the ancient and solitary hills will be a sublimer and more tranquil place of repose for a philosopher than any in the hideous Golgothas of London. Yet, if the gentlemen of the Surgeons' Hall think that any benefit can redound to their science from inspecting the appearances in the body of an opium-eater, let them but speak a word, and I will take care that mine shall be legally secured to them—i.e., as soon as I have done with it myself. Let them not hesitate to express their wishes upon any scruples of false delicacy and consideration for my feelings : I assure them that they will do me too much honour by “demonstrating” on such a crazy body as mine ; and it will give me pleasure to anticipate this posthumous revenge and insult inflicted upon that which has caused me so much suffering in this life. Such bequests are not common : reversionary benefits contingent upon the death of the testator are indeed dangerous to announce in many cases. Of this we have a remarkable instance

in the habits of a Roman prince—who used, upon any notification made to him by rich persons that they had left him a handsome estate in their wills, to express his entire satisfaction at such arrangements, and his gracious acceptance of those loyal legacies ; but then, if the testators neglected to give him immediate possession of the property—if they traitorously “ persisted in living ” (*si vivere perseverarent*, as Suetonius expresses it)—he was highly provoked, and took his measures accordingly. In those times, and from one of the worst of the Cæsars, we might expect such conduct ; but I am sure that, from English surgeons at this day, I need look for no expressions of impatience, or of any other feelings but such as are answerable to that pure love of science and all its interests which induces me to make such an offer.

Sept. 30th, 1822.

THE DAUGHTER OF LEBANON

DAMASCUS, first-born of cities, *Om el Denia*,* mother of generations, that wast before Abraham, that wast before the Pyramids ! what sounds are those that, from a postern gate, looking eastwards over secret paths that wind away to the far distant desert, break the solemn silence of an oriental night ? Whose voice is that which calls upon the spearmen, keeping watch for ever in the turret surmounting the gate, to receive him back into his Syrian home ? Thou knowest him, Damascus, and hast known him in seasons of trouble as one learned in the afflictions of man ; wise alike to take counsel for the suffering spirit or for the suffering body. The voice that breaks upon the night is the voice of a great evangelist—one of the four ; and he is also a great physician. This do the watchmen at the gate thankfully acknowledge, and joyfully they give him entrance. His sandals are white with dust ; for he has been roaming for weeks beyond the desert, under the guidance of Arabs, on missions of hopeful benignity to Palmyra ; † and in spirit he is weary of all things, except faithfulness to God, and burning love to man.

Eastern cities are asleep betimes ; and few sounds or none fretted the quiet of all around him, as the evangelist paced onward to the market-place ; but there another scene awaited him. On the right hand, in an upper chamber, with lattices widely expanded, sat a festal company of youths, revelling under a noonday blaze of light, from cressets and from bright tripods that burned fragrant woods—all joining in choral songs, all crowned with odor-

* "*Om el Denia*" :—Mother of the World is the Arabic title of Damascus. That it was before Abraham—*i.e.*, already an old establishment much more than a thousand years before the siege of Troy, and than two thousand years before our Christian era—may be inferred from Gen. xv. 2 ; and by the general consent of all Eastern races, Damascus is accredited as taking precedency in age of all cities to the west of the Indus.

† Palmyra had not yet reached its meridian splendour of Grecian development, as afterwards near the age of Aurelian, but it was already a noble city.

ous wreaths from Daphne and the banks of the Orontes. Them the evangelist heeded not ; but far away upon the left, close upon a sheltered nook, lighted up by a solitary vase of iron fretwork filled with cedar boughs, and hoisted high upon a spear, behold there sat a woman of loveliness so transcendent, that, when suddenly revealed, as now, out of deepest darkness, she appalled men as a mockery, or a birth of the air. Was she born of woman ? Was it perhaps the angel—so the evangelist argued with himself—that met him in the desert after sunset, and strengthened him by secret talk ? The evangelist went up, and touched her forehead ; and when he found that she was indeed human, and guessed, from the station which she had chosen, that she waited for some one amongst this dissolute crew as her companion, he groaned heavily in spirit, and said, half to himself, but half to her, “ Wert thou, poor ruined flower, adorned so divinely at thy birth—glorified in such excess, that not Solomon in all his pomp—no, nor even the lilies of the field—can approach thy gifts—only that thou shouldest grieve the Holy Spirit of God ? ” The woman trembled exceedingly, and said, “ Rabbi, what should I do ? For behold ! all men forsake me.” The evangelist mused a little, and then secretly to himself he said, “ Now will I search this woman’s heart—whether in very truth it inclineth itself to God, and hath strayed only before fiery compulsion.” Turning therefore to the woman, the Prophet * said, “ Listen : I am the messenger of Him whom thou hast not known ; of Him that made Lebanon and the cedars of Lebanon ; that made the sea, and the heavens, and the host of the stars ; that made the light ; that made the darkness ; that blew the spirit of life into the nostrils of man. His messenger I am : and from Him all power is given me to bind and to loose, to build and to pull down. Ask, therefore, whatsoever thou

* “ *The Prophet* ” :—Though a Prophet was not *therefore* and in virtue of that character an Evangelist, yet every Evangelist was necessarily in the scriptural sense a Prophet. For let it be remembered that a Prophet did not mean a *Predicter*, or *Foreshower* of events, except derivatively and inferentially. What *was* a Prophet in the uniform scriptural sense ? He was a man, who drew aside the curtain from the secret counsels of Heaven. He declared, or made public, the previously hidden truths of God : and because future events might chance to involve divine truth, therefore a revealer of future events might happen so far to be a Prophet. Yet still small was that part of a Prophet’s functions which concerned the foreshowing of events ; and not necessarily any part.

wilt—great or small—and through me thou shalt receive it from God. But, my child, ask not amiss. For God is able out of thy own evil asking to weave snares for thy footing. And oftentimes to the lambs whom He loves, He gives by seeming to refuse ; gives in some better sense, or ” (and his voice swelled into the power of anthems) “ in some far happier world. Now, therefore, my daughter, be wise on thy own behalf ; and say what it is that I shall ask for thee from God.” But the Daughter of Lebanon needed not his caution ; for immediately dropping on one knee to God’s ambassador, whilst the full radiance from the cedar torch fell upon the glory of a penitential eye, she raised her clasped hands in supplication, and said, in answer to the evangelist asking for a second time what gift he should call down upon her from Heaven, “ Lord, that thou wouldest put me back into my father’s house.” And the evangelist, because he was human, dropped a tear as he stooped to kiss her forehead, saying, “ Daughter, thy prayer is heard in heaven ; and I tell thee that the daylight shall not come and go for thirty times, not for the thirtieth time shall the sun drop behind Lebanon, before I will put thee back into thy father’s house.”

Thus the lovely lady came into the guardianship of the evangelist. She sought not to varnish her history, or to palliate her own transgressions. In so far as she had offended at all, her case was that of millions in every generation. Her father was a prince in Lebanon, proud, unforgiving, austere. The wrongs done to his daughter by her dishonourable lover, because done under favour of opportunities created by her confidence in his integrity, her father persisted in resenting as wrongs done by this injured daughter herself ; and, refusing to her all protection, drove her, whilst yet confessedly innocent, into criminal compliances under sudden necessities of seeking daily bread from her own uninstructed efforts. Great was the wrong she suffered both from father and lover ; great was the retribution. She lost a churlish father and a wicked lover ; she gained an apostolic guardian. She lost a princely station in Lebanon ; she gained an early heritage in heaven. For this heritage is hers within thirty days, if she will not defeat it herself. And, whilst the stealthy motion of time travelled towards this thirtieth day, behold ! a burning fever desolated Damascus, which also laid its arrest upon the Daughter of Lebanon, yet gently, and so that hardly for an hour did it withdraw her from the heavenly teach-

ings of the evangelist. And thus daily the doubt was strengthened—would the holy apostle suddenly touch her with his hand, and say, “Woman, be thou whole!” or would he present her on the thirtieth day as a pure bride to Christ? But perfect freedom belongs to Christian service, and she only must make the election.

Up rose the sun on the thirtieth morning in all his pomp, but suddenly was darkened by driving storms. Not until noon was the heavenly orb again revealed; then the glorious light was again unmasked, and again the Syrian valleys rejoiced. This was the hour already appointed for the baptism of the new Christian daughter. Heaven and earth shed gratulation on the happy festival; and, when all was finished, under an awning raised above the level roof of her dwelling-house, the regenerate Daughter of Lebanon, looking over the rose-gardens of Damascus, with amplest prospect of her native hills, lay in blissful trance, making proclamation, by her white baptismal robes, of recovered innocence and of reconciliation with God. And, when the sun was declining to the west, the evangelist, who had sat from noon by the bedside of his spiritual daughter, rose solemnly, and said, “Lady of Lebanon, the day is already come, and the hour is coming, in which my covenant must be fulfilled with thee. Wilt thou, therefore, being now wiser in thy thoughts, suffer God thy new Father to give by seeming to refuse; to give in some better sense, or in some far happier world?” But the Daughter of Lebanon sorrowed at these words; she yearned after her native hills; not for themselves, but because there it was that she had left that sweet twin-born sister, with whom from infant days hand-in-hand she had wandered amongst the everlasting cedars. And again the evangelist sat down by her bedside; whilst she by intervals communed with him, and by intervals slept gently under the oppression of her fever. But as evening drew nearer, and it wanted now but a brief space to the going down of the sun, once again, and with deeper solemnity, the evangelist rose to his feet, and said, “O daughter! this is the thirtieth day, and the sun is drawing near to his rest; brief, therefore, is the time within which I must fulfil the word that God spoke to thee by me.” Then, because light clouds of delirium were playing about her brain, he raised his pastoral staff, and pointing it to her temples, rebuked the clouds, and bade that no more they should trouble her vision, or stand between her and the

forests of Lebanon. And the delirious clouds parted asunder, breaking away to the right and to the left. But upon the forests of Lebanon there hung a mighty mass of overshadowing vapours, bequeathed by the morning's storm. And a second time the evangelist raised his pastoral staff, and, pointing it to the gloomy vapours, rebuked them, and bade that no more they should stand between his daughter and her father's house. And immediately the dark vapours broke away from Lebanon to the right and to the left; and the farewell radiance of the sun lighted up all the paths that ran between the everlasting cedars and her father's palace. But vainly the lady of Lebanon searched every path with her eyes for memorials of her sister. And the evangelist, pitying her sorrow, turned away her eyes to the clear blue sky, which the departing vapours had exposed. And he showed her the peace which was there. And then he said, "O daughter! this also is but a mask." And immediately for the third time he raised his pastoral staff, and, pointing it to the fair blue sky, he rebuked it, and bade that no more it should stand between her and the vision of God. Immediately the blue sky parted to the right and to the left, laying bare the infinite revelations that can be made visible only to dying eyes. And the Daughter of Lebanon said to the evangelist, "O father! what armies are these that I see mustering within the infinite chasm?" And the evangelist replied, "These are the armies of Christ, and they are mustering to receive some dear human blossom, some first-fruits of Christian faith, that shall rise this night to Christ from Damascus." Suddenly, as thus the child of Lebanon gazed upon the mighty vision, she saw bending forward from the heavenly host, as if in gratulation to herself, the one countenance for which she hungered and thirsted. The twin-sister, that should have waited for her in Lebanon, had died of grief, and was waiting for her in Paradise. Immediately in rapture she soared upwards from her couch; immediately in weakness she fell back; and being caught by the evangelist, she flung her arms around his neck; whilst he breathed into her ear his final whisper, "Wilt thou now suffer that God should give by seeming to refuse?"—"Oh yes—yes—yes," was the fervent answer from the Daughter of Lebanon. Immediately the evangelist gave the signal to the heavens, and the heavens gave the signal to the sun; and in one minute after the Daughter of Lebanon had fallen back a marble corpse amongst her white baptismal

robes ; the solar orb dropped behind Lebanon ; and the evangelist, with eyes glorified by mortal and immortal tears, rendered thanks to God that had thus accomplished the word which He spoke through himself to the Magdalen of Lebanon—that not for the thirtieth time should the sun go down behind her native hills, before he had put her back into her Father's house.

ON MURDER

CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE FINE ARTS

ADVERTISEMENT OF A MAN MORBIDLY VIRTUOUS

MOST of us, who read books, have probably heard of a Society for the Promotion of Vice, of the Hell-Fire Club, founded in the last century by Sir Francis D——, etc. At Brighton I think it was, that a Society was formed for the Suppression of Virtue. That society was itself suppressed; but I am sorry to say that another exists in London, of a character still more atrocious. In tendency, it may be denominated a Society for the Encouragement of Murder; but, according to their own delicate *ευφημισμός*, it is styled, The Society of Connoisseurs in Murder. They profess to be curious in homicide; amateurs and diletanti in the various modes of bloodshed; and, in short, Murder-Fanciers. Every fresh atrocity of that class which the police annals of Europe bring up, they meet and criticise as they would a picture, statue, or other work of art. But I need not trouble myself with any attempt to describe the spirit of their proceedings, as the reader will collect *that* much better from one of the Monthly Lectures read before the society last year. This has fallen into my hands accidentally, in spite of all the vigilance exercised to keep their transactions from the public eye. The publication of it will alarm them; and my purpose is, that it should. For I would much rather put them down quietly, by an appeal to public opinion, than by such an exposure of names as would follow an appeal to Bow Street; which last appeal, however, if this should fail, I must really resort to. For my intense virtue will not put up with such things in a Christian land. Even in a heathen land, the toleration of murder—viz., in the dreadful shows of the amphitheatre—was felt by a Christian writer to be the most crying reproach of the public morals. This writer was Lactantius; and with his words, as singularly applicable to the present occasion, I shall

conclude:—" Quid tam horribile," says he, " tam tetrum, quam hominis trucidatio ? Ideo severissimis legibus vita nostra munitur ; ideo bella execrabilia sunt. Invenit tamen consuetudo quatenus homicidium sine bello ac sine legibus faciat : et hoc sibi voluptas quod scelus vindicavit. Quod si interesse homicidio sceleris conscientia est,—et eidem facinori spectator obstrictus est cui et admissor ; ergo et in his gladiatorum cædibus non minus cruore profunditur qui spectat, quam ille qui facit : nec potest esse immunis à sanguine qui voluit effundi ; aut videri non interfecisse, qui interfectori et favit et præmium postulavit."

" What is so dreadful," says Lactantius, " what so dismal and revolting, as the murder of a human creature ? Therefore it is, that life for us is protected by laws the most rigorous : therefore it is, that wars are objects of execration. And yet the traditional usage of Rome has devised a mode of authorising murder apart from war, and in defiance of law ; and the demands of taste (voluptas) are now become the same as those of abandoned guilt." Let the Society of Gentlemen Amateurs consider this ; and let me call their especial attention to the last sentence, which is so weighty, that I shall attempt to convey it in English : " Now, if merely to be present at a murder fastens on a man the character of an accomplice ; if barely to be a spectator involves us in one common guilt with the perpetrator, it follows, of necessity, that, in these murders of the amphitheatre, the hand which inflicts the fatal blow is not more deeply imbrued in blood than his who passively looks on ; neither can *he* be clear of blood who has countenanced its shedding ; nor that man seem other than a participator in murder, who gives his applause to the murderer, and calls for prizes on his behalf." The "*præmia postulavit*" I have not yet heard charged upon the Gentlemen Amateurs of London, though undoubtedly their proceedings tend to that ; but the "*interfectori favit*" is implied in the very title of this association, and expressed in every line of the lecture which follows.

X. Y. Z.

LECTURE

GENTLEMEN,—I have had the honour to be appointed by your committee to the trying task of reading the Williams' Lecture on Murder, considered as one of the Fine Arts; a task which might be easy enough three or four centuries ago, when the art was little understood, and few great models had been exhibited; but in this age, when masterpieces of excellence have been executed by professional men, it must be evident, that in the style of criticism applied to them, the public will look for something of a corresponding improvement. Practice and theory must advance *pari passu*. People begin to see that something more goes to the composition of a fine murder than two blockheads to kill and be killed—a knife—a purse—and a dark lane. Design, gentlemen, grouping, light and shade, poetry, sentiment, are now deemed indispensable to attempts of this nature. Mr. Williams has exalted the ideal of murder to all of us; and to me, therefore, in particular, has deepened the arduousness of my task. Like Æschylus or Milton in poetry, like Michael Angelo in painting, he has carried his art to a point of colossal sublimity; and, as Mr. Wordsworth observes, has in a manner “created the taste by which he is to be enjoyed.” To sketch the history of the art, and to examine its principles critically, now remains as a duty for the connoisseur, and for judges of quite another stamp from his Majesty's Judges of Assize.

Before I begin, let me say a word or two to certain prigs, who affect to speak of our society as if it were in some degree immoral in its tendency. Immoral! Jupiter protect me, gentlemen, what is it that people mean? I am for morality, and always shall be, and for virtue, and all that; and I do affirm, and always shall (let what will come of it), that murder is an improper line of conduct, highly improper; and I do not stick to assert, that any man who deals in murder, must have very incorrect ways of thinking, and truly inaccurate principles; and so far from aiding and abetting him by pointing out his victim's hiding-place, as a great moralist * of Germany declared it

* Kant—who carried his demands of unconditional veracity to so extravagant a length as to affirm, that, if a man were to see an innocent person escape from a murderer, it would be his duty, on being questioned by the murderer, to tell the truth, and to point out the retreat of the innocent person, under any certainty of causing murder. Lest this doctrine should be supposed to have escaped him in any heat of dispute, on being taxed with it by a celebrated French writer, he solemnly re-affirmed it, with his reasons.

to be every good man's duty to do, I would subscribe one shilling and sixpence to have him apprehended, which is more by eighteenpence than the most eminent moralists have hitherto subscribed for that purpose. But what then? Everything in this world has two handles. Murder, for instance, may be laid hold of by its moral handle (as it generally is in the pulpit, and at the Old Bailey); and *that*, I confess, is its weak side; or it may also be treated *æsthetic-ally*, as the Germans call it—that is, in relation to good taste.

To illustrate this, I will urge the authority of three eminent persons; viz., S. T. Coleridge, Aristotle, and Mr. Howship the surgeon. To begin with S. T. C. One night, many years ago, I was drinking tea with him in Berners Street (which, by the way, for a short street, has been uncommonly fruitful in men of genius). Others were there besides myself; and, amidst some carnal considerations of tea and toast, we were all imbibing a dissertation on Plotinus from the attic lips of S. T. C. Suddenly a cry arose of, "*Fire—fire!*" upon which all of us, master and disciples, Plato and *οἱ περὶ τον Πλάτωνα*, rushed out, eager for the spectacle. The fire was in Oxford Street, at a pianoforte-maker's; and, as it promised to be a conflagration of merit, I was sorry that my engagements forced me away from Mr. Coleridge's party, before matters had come to a crisis. Some days after, meeting with my Platonic host, I reminded him of the case, and begged to know how that very promising exhibition had terminated. "Oh, sir," said he, "it turned out so ill that we damned it unanimously." Now, does any man suppose that Mr. Coleridge—who, for all he is too fat to be a person of active virtue, is undoubtedly a worthy Christian—that this good S. T. C., I say, was an incendiary, or capable of wishing any ill to the poor man and his pianofortes (many of them, doubtless, with the additional keys)? On the contrary, I know him to be that sort of man, that I durst stake my life upon it, he would have worked an engine in a case of necessity, although rather of the fattest for such fiery trials of his virtue. But how stood the case? Virtue was in no request. On the arrival of the fire-engines, morality had devolved wholly on the insurance office. This being the case, he had a right to gratify his taste. He had left his tea. Was he to have nothing in return?

I contend that the most virtuous man, under the premises stated, was entitled to make a luxury of the fire, and

to hiss it, as he would any other performance that raised expectations in the public mind which afterwards it disappointed. Again, to cite another great authority, what says the Stagirite? He (in the Fifth Book, I think it is, of his *Metaphysics*) describes what he calls *κλεπτήν τέλειον*—i.e., a *perfect thief*; and, as to Mr. Howship, in a work of his on Indigestion, he makes no scruple to talk with admiration of a certain ulcer which he had seen, and which he styles “a beautiful ulcer.” Now, will any man pretend, that, abstractedly considered, a thief could appear to Aristotle a perfect character, or that Mr. Howship could be enamoured of an ulcer? Aristotle, it is well known, was himself so very moral a character, that, not content with writing his *Nichomachéan Ethics*, in one volume octavo, he also wrote another system, called *Magna Moralia*, or *Big Ethics*. Now, it is impossible that a man who composes any ethics at all, big or little, should admire a thief *per se*; and as to Mr. Howship, it is well known that he makes war upon all ulcers, and, without suffering himself to be seduced by their charms, endeavours to banish them from the County of Middlesex. But the truth is, that, however objectionable *per se*, yet, relatively to others of their class, both a thief and an ulcer may have infinite degrees of merit. They are both imperfections, it is true; but, to be imperfect being their essence, the very greatness of their imperfection becomes their perfection. *Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna*. A thief like Autolycus or the once famous George Barrington, and a grim phagedænic ulcer, superbly defined, and running regularly through all its natural stages, may no less justly be regarded as ideals after *their* kind, than the most faultless moss-rose amongst flowers, in its progress from bud to “bright consummate flower”; or, amongst human flowers, the most magnificent young female, apparelled in the pomp of womanhood. And thus not only the ideal of an inkstand may be imagined (as Mr. Coleridge illustrated in his celebrated correspondence with Mr. Blackwood), in which, by the way, there is not so much, because an inkstand is a laudable sort of thing, and a valuable member of society; but even imperfection itself may have its ideal or perfect state.

Really, gentlemen, I beg pardon for so much philosophy at one time; and now let me apply it. When a murder is in the paulo-post-futurum tense—not done, not even (according to modern purism) *being* done, but only going to be done—and a rumour of it comes to our ears, by all means let us treat it morally. But suppose it over and

done, and that you can say of it, *Τετέλεσται*, It is finished, or (in that adamantine molossus of Medea) *εἵργασται*, Done it is: it is a *fait accompli*; suppose the poor murdered man to be out of his pain, and the rascal that did it off like a shot, nobody knows whither; suppose, lastly, that we have done our best, by putting out our legs, to trip up the fellow in his flight, but all to no purpose—"abiit, evasit, excessit, erupit," etc.—why, then, I say, what's the use of any more virtue? Enough has been given to morality; now comes the turn of Taste and the Fine Arts. A sad thing it was, no doubt, very sad; but *we* can't mend it. Therefore let us make the best of a bad matter; and, as it is impossible to hammer anything out of it for moral purposes, let us treat it æsthetically, and see if it will turn to account in that way. Such is the logic of a sensible man, and what follows? We dry up our tears, and have the satisfaction, perhaps, to discover that a transaction, which, morally considered, was shocking, and without a leg to stand upon, when tried by principles of Taste, turns out to be a very meritorious performance. Thus all the world is pleased; the old proverb is justified, that it is an ill wind which blows nobody good; the amateur, from looking bilious and sulky, by too close an attention to virtue, begins to pick up his crumbs; and generally hilarity prevails. Virtue has had her day; and henceforward, *Virtu*, so nearly the same thing as to differ only by a single letter (which surely is not worth haggling or higgling about)—*Virtu*, I repeat, and Connoisseurship, have leave to provide for themselves. Upon this principle, gentlemen, I propose to guide your studies, from Cain to Mr. Thurtell. Through this great gallery of murder, therefore, together let us wander hand in hand, in delighted admiration; while I endeavour to point your attention to the objects of profitable criticism.

The first murder is familiar to you all. As the inventor of murder, and the father of the art, Cain must have been a man of first-rate genius. All the Cains were men of genius. Tubal Cain invented tubes, I think, or some such thing. But, whatever might be the originality and genius of the artist, every art was then in its infancy, and the works must be criticised with a recollection of that fact. Even Tubal's work would probably be little approved at this day in Sheffield; and therefore of Cain (Cain senior, I mean) it is no disparagement to say, that his performance was but so-so. Milton, however, is supposed to have thought

differently. By his way of relating the case, it should seem to have been rather a pet murder with him, for he retouches it with an apparent anxiety for its picturesque effect :—

“Whereat he inly raged ; and, as they talk’d,
Smote him into the midriff with a stone
That beat out life : he fell : and, deadly pale,
Groan’d out his soul with *gushing blood effused*.”

Par. Lost, B. xi.

Upon this, Richardson the painter, who had an eye for effect, remarks as follows, in his “Notes on Paradise Lost,” p. 497 :—“It has been thought,” says he, “that Cain beat (as the common saying is) the breath out of his brother’s body with a great stone ; Milton gives in to this, with the addition, however, of a large wound.” In this place it was a judicious addition ; for the rudeness of the weapon, unless raised and enriched by a warm, sanguinary colouring, has too much of the naked air of the savage school ; as if the deed were perpetrated by a Polypheme without science, premeditation, or anything but a mutton bone. However, I am chiefly pleased with the improvement, as it implies that Milton was an amateur. As to Shakspeare, there never was a better ; witness his description of the murdered Duncan, Banquo, etc., and, above all, witness his incomparable miniature, in “Henry VI.,” of the murdered Gloucester.*

* The passage occurs in the *Second* part (act 3) of “Henry VI.,” and is doubly remarkable—first, for its critical fidelity to nature, were the description meant only for *poetic* effect ; but, secondly, for the *judicial* value impressed upon it when offered (as here it is offered) in silent corroboration legally of a dreadful whisper all at once arising, that foul play had been dealing with a great prince, clothed with an official state character. It is the Duke of Gloucester, faithful guardian and loving uncle of the simple and imbecile king, who has been found dead in his bed. How shall this event be interpreted ? Had he died under some natural visitation of Providence, or by violence from his enemies ? The two court factions read the circumstantial indications of the case into opposite constructions. The affectionate and afflicted young king, whose position almost pledges him to neutrality, cannot, nevertheless, disguise his overwhelming suspicions of hellish conspiracy in the background. Upon this, a leader of the queen’s faction endeavours to break the force of this royal frankness, countersigned and echoed most impressively by Lord Warwick. “What *instance*,” he asks—meaning by *instance* not example or illustration, as thoughtless commentators have constantly supposed, but in the common scholastic sense—what *instantia*, what pressure of argument, what urgent plea, can Lord Warwick put forward in support of his “dreadful oath”—an oath, namely, that, as surely as he hopes for the life eternal, so surely

“I do believe that violent hands were laid
Upon the life of this thrice-famed duke.”

The foundation of the art having been once laid, it is pitiable to see how it slumbered without improvement for ages. In fact, I shall now be obliged to leap over all murders, sacred and profane, as utterly unworthy of notice, until long after the Christian era. Greece, even in the age of Pericles, produced no murder, or at least none is recorded, of the slightest merit; and Rome had too little originality of genius in any of the arts to succeed where her model failed her.* In fact, the Latin language sinks

Ostensibly the challenge is to Warwick, but substantially it is meant for the king. And the reply of Warwick, the argument on which he builds, lies in a solemn array of all the changes worked in the duke's features by death, as irreconcilable with any other hypothesis than that this death had been a violent one. What argument have I that Gloucester died under the hands of murderers? Why, the following roll-call of awful changes, affecting head, face, nostrils, eyes, hands, etc., which do not belong indifferently to *any* mode of death, but exclusively to a death by violence:—

“But see, his face is black and full of blood;
His eyeballs farther out than when he lived,
Staring full ghastly, like a strangled man;
His hair uproar'd, his nostrils stretch'd with struggling;
His hands abroad display'd, as one that grasp'd
And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued.
Look on the sheets:—his hair, you see, is sticking;
His well-proportion'd beard made rough and rugg'd,
Like to the summer's corn by tempest lodged.
It cannot be but he was murder'd here;
The least of all these signs were probable.”

As the logic of the case, let us not for a moment forget, that, to be of any value, the signs and indications pleaded must be sternly *diagnostic*. The discrimination sought for is between death that is *natural*, and death that is *violent*. All indications, therefore, that belong equally and indifferently to either, are equivocal, useless, and alien from the very purpose of the signs here registered by Shakspeare.

* At the time of writing this, I held the common opinion upon that subject. Mere inconsideration it was that led to so erroneous a judgment. Since then, on closer reflection, I have seen ample reason to retract it: satisfied I now am, that the Romans, in every art which allowed to them any parity of advantages, had merits as racy, native, and characteristic, as the best of the Greeks. Elsewhere I shall plead this cause circumstantially, with the hope of converting the reader. In the meantime, I was anxious to lodge my protest against this ancient error; an error which commenced in the time-serving sycophancy of Virgil the court-poet. With the base purpose of gratifying Augustus in his vindictive spite against Cicero, and by way of introducing, therefore, the little clause, *orabunt Causas melius* as applying to all Athenian against all Roman orators, Virgil did not scruple to sacrifice by wholesale the just pretensions of his compatriots collectively.

under the very idea of murder. "The man was murdered";—how will this sound in Latin? *Interfectus est, interemptus est*—which simply expresses a homicide; and hence the Christian Latinity of the middle ages was obliged to introduce a new word, such as the feebleness of classic conceptions never ascended to. *Murdratus est*, says the sublimer dialect of Gothic ages. Meantime, the Jewish school of murder kept alive whatever was yet known in the art, and gradually transferred it to the Western World. Indeed, the Jewish school was always respectable, even its medieval stages, as the case of Hugh of Lincoln shows, which was honoured with the approbation of Chaucer, on occasion of another performance from the same school, which he puts into the mouth of the Lady Abbess.

Recurring, however, for one moment, to classical antiquity, I cannot but think that Catiline, Clodius, and some of that coterie, would have made first-rate artists; and it is on all accounts to be regretted, that the priggism of Cicero robbed his country of the only chance she had for distinction in this line. As the *subject* of a murder, no person could have answered better than himself. Oh Gemini! how he would have howled with panic, if he had heard Cethegus under his bed. It would have been truly diverting to have listened to him; and satisfied I am, gentlemen, that he would have preferred the *utile* of creeping into a closet, or even into a *cloaca*, to the *honestum* of facing the bold artist.

To come now to the dark ages—(by which we that speak with precision mean, *par excellence*, the tenth century as a meridian line, and the two centuries immediately before and after, full midnight being from A.D. 888 to A.D. 1111)—these ages ought naturally to be favourable to the art of murder, as they were to church architecture, to stained glass, etc.; and, accordingly, about the latter end of this period, there arose a great character in our art, I mean the Old Man of the Mounatins. He was a shining light, indeed, and I need not tell you, that the very word "assassin" is deduced from him. So keen an amateur was he, that on one occasion, when his own life was attempted by a favourite assassin, he was so much pleased with the talent shown, that, notwithstanding the failure of the artist, he created him a duke upon the spot, with remainder to the female line, and settled a pension on him for three lives. Assassination is a branch of the art which demands a separate notice; and it is possible

that I may devote an entire lecture to it. Meantime, I shall only observe how odd it is, that this branch of the art has flourished by intermitting fits. It never rains, but it pours. Our own age can boast of some fine specimens, such, for instance, as Bellingham's affair with the prime minister Percival, the Duc de Berri's case at the Parisian Opera House, the Maréchal Bessieres' case at Avignon ; and about two and a half centuries ago, there was a most brilliant constellation of murders in this class. I need hardly say, that I allude especially to those seven splendid works—the assassinations of William I., of Orange ; of the three French Henries, viz.—Henri, Duke of Guise that had a fancy for the throne of France ; of Henry III., last prince in the line of Valois, who then occupied that throne ; and finally of Henri IV., his brother-in-law, who succeeded to that throne as first prince in the line of Bourbon ; not eighteen years later came the 5th on the roll, viz., that of our Duke of Buckingham (which you will find excellently described in the letters published by Sir Henry Ellis, of the British Museum), 6thly of Gustavus Adolphus, and 7thly of Wallenstein. What a glorious Pleiad of murders ! And it increases one's admiration—that this bright constellation of artistic displays, comprehending 3 Majesties, 3 Serene Highnesses, and 1 Excellency, all lay within so narrow a field of time as between A.D. 1588 and 1635. The King of Sweden's assassination, by the by, is doubted by many writers, Harte amongst others ; but they are wrong. He was murdered ; and I consider his murder unique in its excellence ; for he was murdered at noon-day, and on the field of battle—a feature of original conception, which occurs in no other work of art that I remember. To conceive the idea of a secret murder on private account, as enclosed within a little parenthesis on a vast stage of public battle-carnage, is like Hamlet's subtle device of a tragedy within a tragedy. Indeed, all of these assassinations may be studied with profit by the advanced connoisseur. They are all of them *exemplaria* model murders, pattern murders, of which one may say,—

“Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ” ;

especially *nocturnâ*.

In these assassinations of princes and statesmen, there is nothing to excite our wonder ; important changes often depend on their deaths ; and, from the eminence on which they stand, they are peculiarly exposed to the aim of every

artist who happens to be possessed by the craving for scenical effect. But there is another class of assassinations, which has prevailed from an early period of the seventeenth century, that really *does* surprise me ; I mean the assassination of philosophers. For, gentlemen, is it a fact, that every philosopher of eminence for the two last centuries has either been murdered, or, at the least, been very near it ; insomuch, that if a man calls himself a philosopher, and never had his life attempted, rest assured there is nothing in him ; and against Locke's philosophy in particular, I think it an unanswerable objection (if we needed any), that, although he carried his throat about with him in this world for seventy-two years, no man ever condescended to cut it. As these cases of philosophers are not much known, and are generally good and well composed in their circumstances, I shall here read an excursus on that subject, chiefly by way of showing my own learning.

The first great philosopher of the seventeenth century (if we except Bacon and Galileo) was Des Cartes ; and if ever one could say of a man that he was all *but* murdered—murdered within an inch—one must say it of him. The case was this, as reported by Baillet in his “*Vie De M. Des Cartes*,” tom. I. p. 102–3. In the year 1621, when Des Cartes might be about twenty-six years old, he was touring about as usual (for he was as restless as a hyena) ; and, coming to the Elbe, either at Gluckstadt or at Hamburgh, he took shipping for East Friezland. What he could want in East Friezland no man has ever discovered ; and perhaps he took this into consideration himself ; for, on reaching Embden, he resolved to sail instantly for *West* Friezland ; and being very impatient of delay, he hired a bark, with a few mariners to navigate it. No sooner had he got out to sea, than he made a pleasing discovery, viz., that he had shut himself up in a den of murderers. His crew, says M. Baillet, he soon found out to be “*des scélérats*”—not *amateurs*, gentlemen, as we are, but professional men—the height of whose ambition at that moment was to cut his individual throat. But the story is too pleasing to be abridged ; I shall give it, therefore, accurately, from the French of his biographer : “*M. Des Cartes had no company but that of his servant, with whom he was conversing in French. The sailors, who took him for a foreign merchant, rather than a cavalier, concluded that he must have money about him. Accordingly, they came to a resolution by no means advantageous to his purse. There*

is this difference, however, between sea-robbers and the robbers in forests, that the latter may, without hazard, spare the lives of their victims ; whereas the others cannot put a passenger on shore in such a case without running the risk of being apprehended. The crew of M. Des Cartes arranged their measures with a view to evade any danger of that sort. They observed that he was a stranger from a distance, without acquaintance in the country, and that nobody would take any trouble to inquire about him, in case he should never come to hand (*quand il viendrait à manquer*).” Think, gentlemen, of these Friezland dogs discussing a philosopher as if he were a puncheon of rum consigned to some ship-broker. “His temper, they remarked; was very mild and patient ; and, judging from the gentleness of his deportment, and the courtesy with which he treated themselves, that he could be nothing more than some green young man, without station or root in the world, they concluded that they should have all the easier task in disposing of his life. They made no scruple to discuss the whole matter in his presence, as not supposing that he understood any other language than that in which he conversed with his servant ; and the amount of their deliberation was—to murder him, then to throw him into the sea, and to divide his spoils.”

Excuse my laughing, gentlemen ; but the fact is, I always *do* laugh when I think of this case—two things about it seem so droll. One is, the horrid panic or “funk” (as the men of Eton call it) in which Des Cartes must have found himself, upon hearing this regular drama sketched for his own death—funeral—succession and administration to his effects. But another thing which seems to me still more funny about this affair is, that if these Friezland hounds had been “game,” we should have no Cartesian philosophy ; and how we could have done without *that*, considering the world of books it has produced, I leave to any respectable trunk-maker to declare.

However, to go on : spite of his enormous funk, Des Cartes showed fight, and by that means awed these Anti-Cartesian rascals. “Finding,” says M. Baillet, “that the matter was no joke, M. Des Cartes leaped upon his feet in a trice, assumed a stern countenance that these cravens had never looked for, and, addressing them in their own language, threatened to run them through on the spot if they dared to give him any insult.” Certainly, gentlemen, this would have been an honour far above the merits

of such inconsiderable rascals—to be spitted like larks upon a Cartesian sword; and therefore I am glad M. Des Cartes did not rob the gallows by executing his threat, especially as he could not possibly have brought his vessel to port, after he had murdered his crew; so that he must have continued to cruise for ever in the Zuyder Zee, and would probably have been mistaken by sailors for the *Flying Dutchman*, homeward bound. “The spirit which M. Des Cartes manifested,” says his biographer, “had the effect of magic on these wretches. The suddenness of their consternation struck their minds with a confusion which blinded them to their advantage, and they conveyed him to his destination as peaceably as he could desire.”

Possibly, gentlemen, you may fancy that, on the model of Cæsar’s address to his poor ferryman—“*Cæsarem vehis et fortunas ejus*”—M. Des Cartes needed only to have said, “Dogs, you cannot cut my throat, for you carry Des Cartes and his philosophy,” and might safely have defied them to do their worst. A German Emperor had the same notion, when, being cautioned to keep out of the way of a cannonading, he replied, “Tut! man. Did you ever hear of a cannon-ball that killed an emperor?”* As to an emperor I cannot say, but a less thing has sufficed to smash a philosopher; and the next great philosopher of Europe undoubtedly *was* murdered. This was Spinoza.

I know very well the common opinion about him is, that he died in his bed. Perhaps he did, but he was murdered for all that; and this I shall prove by a book published at Brussels in the year 1731, entitled “*La Vie de Spinoza, par M. Jean Colerus*,” with many additions, from a MS. life, by one of his friends. Spinoza died on the 21st February, 1677, being then little more than forty-four years old. This, of itself, looks suspicious; and Mr. Jean admits, that a certain expression in the MS. life of him would warrant the conclusion, “*que sa mort n’ a pas été tout-à-fait naturelle.*” Living in a damp country, and a sailor’s country, like Holland, he may be thought to have indulged a good deal in grog, especially in punch,† which was then

* This same argument has been employed at least once too often: some centuries back a dauphin of France, when admonished of his risk from small-pox, made the same demand as the emperor—“Had any gentleman heard of a dauphin killed by small-pox?” No; not any gentleman *had* heard of such a case. And yet, for all that, this dauphin died of that same small-pox.

† “June 1, 1675.—Drinke part of three boules of punch (a liquor very strainge to me),” says the Rev. Mr. Henry Teonge, in

newly discovered. Undoubtedly he might have done so ; but the fact is, that he did not. M. Jean calls him “*extrêmement sobre en son boire et en son manger.*” And though some wild stories were afloat about his using the juice of mandragora (p. 140) and opium (p. 144), yet neither of these articles is found in his druggist’s bill. Living, therefore, with such sobriety, how was it possible that he should die a natural death at forty-four ? Hear his biographer’s account :—“ Sunday morning, the 21st of February, before it was church time, Spinosa came downstairs, and conversed with the master and mistress of the house.” At this time, therefore, perhaps ten o’clock on Sunday morning, you see that Spinosa was alive, and pretty well. But it seems “ he had summoned from Amsterdam a certain physician, whom,” says the biographer, “ I shall not otherwise point out to notice than by these two letters, L. M.” This L. M. had directed the people of the house to purchase “ an ancient cock,” and to have him boiled forthwith, in order that Spinosa might take some broth about noon ; which in fact he did ; and ate some of the *old cock* with a good appetite, after the landlord and his wife had returned from church.

“ In the afternoon, L. M. staid alone with Spinosa, the people of the house having returned to church ; on coming out from which, they learned, with much surprise, that Spinosa had died about three o’clock, in the presence of L. M., who took his departure for Amsterdam that same evening, by the night-boat, without paying the least attention to the deceased,” and probably without paying very much attention to the payment of his own little account. “ No doubt he was the readier to dispense with these duties, as he had possessed himself of a ducatoon, and a small quantity of silver, together with a silver-hafted knife, and had absconded with his pillage.” Here you see, gentlemen, the murder is plain, and the manner of it. It was L. M. who murdered Spinosa for his money. Poor Spinosa was an invalid, meagre and weak : as no blood was observed, L. M. no doubt threw him down, and smothered him with pillows—the poor man being already half suffocated by his

his *Diary* published by C. Knight. In a note on this passage, a reference is made to Fryer’s *Travels to the East Indies*, 1672, who speaks of “ that enervating liquor called *paunch* (which is Hindostanee for five), from five ingredients.” Made thus, it seems the medical men called it *diapente* ; if with four only, *diatessaron*. No doubt, it was this evangelical name that recommended it to the Rev. Mr. Teonge.

infernal dinner. After masticating that "ancient cock," which I take to mean a cock of the preceding century, in what condition could the poor invalid find himself for a stand-up fight with L. M.? But who was L. M.? It surely never could be Lindley Murray, for I saw him at York in 1825; and, besides, I do not think he would do such a thing—at least, not to a brother grammarian: for you know, gentlemen, that Spinoso wrote a very respectable Hebrew grammar.

Hobbes—but why, or on what principle, I never could understand—was not murdered. This was a capital oversight of the professional men in the seventeenth century, because in every light he was a fine subject for murder, except, indeed, that he was lean and skinny; for I can prove that he had money, and (what is very funny) he had no right to make the least resistance; since, according to himself, irresistible power creates the very highest species of right, so that it is rebellion of the blackest dye to refuse to be murdered, when a competent force appears to murder you. However, gentlemen, though he was not murdered, I am happy to assure you that (by his own account) he was three times very near being murdered, which is consolatory. The first time was in the spring of 1640, when he pretends to have circulated a little MS. on the king's behalf against the Parliament; he never could produce this MS., by the by; but he says, that, "Had not His Majesty dissolved the Parliament" (in May), "it had brought him into danger of his life." Dissolving the Parliament, however, was of no use; for in November of the same year the Long Parliament assembled, and Hobbes, a second time fearing he should be murdered, ran away to France. This looks like the madness of John Dennis, who thought that Louis XIV. would never make peace with Queen Anne, unless he (Dennis, to wit) were given up to French vengeance; and actually ran away from the sea-coast under that belief. In France, Hobbes managed to take care of his throat pretty well for ten years; but at the end of that time, by way of paying court to Cromwell, he published his "Leviathan." The old coward now began to "funk" horribly for the third time; he fancied the swords of the cavaliers were constantly at his throat, recollecting how they had served the Parliament ambassadors at the Hague and Madrid. "Tum," says he, in his dog-Latin life of himself,

"Tum venit in mentem mihi Dorislaus et Ascham;
Tanquam proscripto terror ubique aderat."

And accordingly he ran home to England. Now, certainly, it is very true that a man deserved a cudgelling for writing "Leviathan"; and two or three cudgellings for writing a pentameter ending so villainously as "terror ubique aderat!" But no man ever thought him worthy of anything beyond cudgelling. And, in fact, the whole story is a bounce of his own. For, in a most abusive letter which he wrote "to a learned person" (meaning Wallis the mathematician), he gives quite another account of the matter, and says (p. 8), he ran home "because he would not trust his safety with the French clergy"; insinuating that he was likely to be murdered for his religion, which would have been a high joke indeed—Tom's being brought to the stake for religion.

Bounce or not bounce, however, certain it is that Hobbes, to the end of his life, feared that somebody would murder him. This is proved by the story I am going to tell you: it is not from a manuscript, but (as Mr. Coleridge says) it is as good as manuscript; for it comes from a book now entirely forgotten, viz., "The Creed of Mr. Hobbes Examined: in a Conference between him and a Student in Divinity" (published about ten years before Hobbes's death). The book is anonymous, but it was written by Tennison, the same who, about thirty years after, succeeded Tillotson as Archbishop of Canterbury. The introductory anecdote is as follows:—"A certain divine" (no doubt Tennison himself) "took an annual tour of one month to different parts of the island." In one of these excursions (1670), he visited the Peak in Derbyshire, partly in consequence of Hobbes's description of it. Being in that neighbourhood, he could not but pay a visit to Buxton; and at the very moment of his arrival, he was fortunate enough to find a party of gentlemen dismounting at the inn-door, amongst whom was a long thin fellow, who turned out to be no less a person than Mr. Hobbes, who probably had ridden over from Chatsworth.* Meeting so great a lion, a tourist, in search of the picturesque, could do no less than present himself in the character of bore. And luckily for this scheme, two of Mr. Hobbes's companions were suddenly summoned

* Chatsworth was then, as now, the superb seat of the Cavendishes in their highest branch—in those days Earl, at present Duke, of Devonshire. It is to the honour of this family that, through two generations, they gave an asylum to Hobbes. It is noticeable that Hobbes was born in the year of the Spanish Armada, i.e., in 1588: such, at least, is my belief. And, therefore, at this meeting with Tennison in 1670, he must have been about 82 years old.

away by express ; so that, for the rest of his stay at Buxton, he had Leviathan entirely to himself, and had the honour of bowing with him in the evening. Hobbes, it seems, at first showed a good deal of stiffness, for he was shy of divines ; but this wore off, and he became very sociable and funny, and they agreed to go into the bath together. How Tennyson could venture to gambol in the same water with Leviathan, I cannot explain ; but so it was : they frolicked about like two dolphins, though Hobbes must have been as old as the hills ; and “ in those intervals wherein they abstained from swimming and plunging themselves ” (*i.e.*, diving), “ they discoursed of many things relating to the Baths of the Ancients, and the Origine of Springs. When they had in this manner passed away an hour, they stepped out of the bath ; and, having dried and cloathed themselves, they sate down in expectation of such a supper as the place afforded ; designing to refresh themselves like the *Deipnosophistæ*, and rather to reason than to drink profoundly. But in this innocent intention they were interrupted by the disturbance arising from a little quarrel, in which some of the ruder people in the house were for a short time engaged. At this Mr. Hobbes seemed much concerned, though he was at some distance from the persons.” And why was he concerned, gentlemen ? No doubt, you fancy, from some benign and disinterested love of peace, worthy of an old man and a philosopher. But listen—“ For awhile he was not composed, but related it once or twice as to himself, with a low and careful, *i.e.* anxious, tone, how Sextus Roscius was murdered after supper by the *Balneæ Palatinæ*. Of such general extent is that remark of Cicero, in relation to Epicurus the Atheist, of whom he observed, that he of all men dreaded most those things which he contemned—Death and the Gods.” Merely because it was supper time, and in the neighbourhood of a bath, Mr. Hobbes must have the fate of Sextus Roscius. He must be murdered, because Sextus Roscius was murdered. What logic was there in this, unless to a man who was always dreaming of murder ? Here was Leviathan, no longer afraid of the daggers of English cavaliers or French clergy, but “ frightened from his propriety ” by a row in an alehouse between some honest clod-hoppers of Derbyshire, whom his own gaunt scarecrow of a person, that belonged to quite another century, would have frightened out of their wits.

Malebranche, it will give you pleasure to hear, was

murdered. The man who murdered him is well known: it was Bishop Berkeley. The story is familiar, though hitherto not put in a proper light. Berkeley, when a young man, went to Paris, and called on Père Malebranche. He found him in his cell cooking. Cooks have ever been a *genus irritabile*; authors still more so: Malebranche was both: a dispute arose; the old father, warm already, became warmer; culinary and metaphysical irritations united to derange his liver: he took to his bed, and died. Such is the common version of the story: "So the whole ear of Denmark is abused." The fact is, that the matter was hushed up, out of consideration for Berkeley, who (as Pope justly observes) had "every virtue under heaven": else it was well known that Berkeley, feeling himself nettled by the waspishness of the old Frenchman, squared at him; a *turn-up* was the consequence: Malebranche was floored in the first round; the conceit was wholly taken out of him; and he would perhaps have given in; but Berkeley's blood was now up, and he insisted on the old Frenchman's retracting his doctrine of Occasional Causes. The vanity of the man was too great for this; and he fell a sacrifice to the impetuosity of Irish youth, combined with his own absurd obstinacy.

Leibnitz, being every way superior to Malebranche, one might, *a fortiori*, have counted on *his* being murdered; which, however, was not the case. I believe he was nettled at this neglect, and felt himself insulted by the security in which he passed his days. In no other way can I explain his conduct at the latter end of his life, when he chose to grow very avaricious, and to hoard up large sums of gold, which he kept in his own house. This was at Vienna, where he died; and letters are still in existence, describing the immeasurable anxiety which he entertained for his throat. Still his ambition, for being *attempted* at least, was so great, that he would not forego the danger. A late English pedagogue, of Birmingham manufacture—viz., Dr. Parr—took a more selfish course under the same circumstance. He had amassed a considerable quantity of gold and silver plate, which was for some time deposited in his bedroom at his parsonage house, Hatton. But growing every day more afraid of being murdered, which he knew that he could not stand (and to which, indeed, he never had the slightest pretensions), he transferred the whole to the Hatton blacksmith; conceiving, no doubt, that the murder of a blacksmith

would fall more lightly on the *salus reipublicæ*, than that of a pedagogue. But I have heard this greatly disputed; and it seems now generally agreed, that one good horse-shoe is worth about two and a quarter Spital sermons.*

As Leibnitz, though not murdered, may be said to have died, partly of the fear that he should be murdered, and partly of vexation that he was not, Kant, on the other hand—who manifested no ambition in that way—had a narrower escape from a murderer than any man we read of, except Des Cartes. So absurdly does fortune throw about her favours! The case is told, I think, in an anonymous life of this very great man. For health's sake, Kant imposed upon himself, at one time, a walk of six miles every day along a high-road. This fact becoming known to a man who had his private reasons for committing murder, at the third milestone from Königsberg, he waited for his "intended," who came up to time as duly as a mail-coach.

But for an accident, Kant was a dead man. This accident lay in the scrupulous, or what Mrs. Quickly would have called the *peevisish*, morality of the murderer. An old professor, he fancied, might be laden with sins. Not so a young child. On this consideration, he turned away from Kant at the critical moment, and soon after murdered a child of five years old. Such is the German account of the matter; but my opinion is, that the murderer was an amateur, who felt how little would be gained to the cause of good taste by murdering an old, arid, and adust metaphysician; there was no room for display, as the man could not possibly look more like a mummy when dead, than he had done alive.

Thus, gentlemen, I have traced the connection between philosophy and our art, until insensibly I find that I have wandered into our own era. This I shall not take any pains to characterise apart from that which preceded it, for, in fact, they have no distinct character. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, together with so much of the nineteenth as we have yet seen, jointly compose the

* "*Spital Sermons*":—Dr. Parr's chief public appearances as an author, after his original appearance in the famous Latin preface to Bellendenus (don't say Bellendenus), occurred in certain Sermons at periodic intervals, delivered on behalf of some hospital (I really forget what) which retained for its official designation the old word *Spital*: and thus it happened that the Sermons themselves were generally known by the title of *Spital Sermons*.

Augustan age of murder. The finest work of the seventeenth century is, unquestionably, the murder of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, which has my entire approbation. In the grand feature of *mystery*, which in some shape or other ought to colour every judicious attempt at murder, it is excellent; for the mystery is not yet dispersed. The attempt to fasten the murder upon the Papists, which would injure it as much as some well-known Correggios have been injured by the professional picture-cleaners, or would even ruin it by translating it into the spurious class of mere political or partisan murders, thoroughly wanting in the murderous animus, I exhort the society to discountenance. In fact, this notion is altogether baseless, and arose in pure Protestant fanaticism. Sir Edmondbury had not distinguished himself amongst the London magistrates by any severity against the Papists, or in favouring the attempts of zealots to enforce the penal law against individuals. He had not armed against himself the animosities of any religious sect whatever. And as to the droppings of wax lights upon the dress of the corpse when first discovered in a ditch, from which it was inferred at the time that the priests attached to the Popish Queen's Chapel had been concerned in the murder, either these were mere fraudulent artifices devised by those who wished to fix the suspicion upon the Papists, or else the whole allegation—wax-droppings, and the suggested cause of the droppings—might be a bounce or fib of Bishop Burnet; who, as the Duchess of Portsmouth used to say, was the one great master of fibbing and romancing in the seventeenth century. At the same time, it must be observed that the quantity of murder was not great in Sir Edmondbury's century, at least amongst our own artists; which, perhaps, is attributable to the want of enlightened patronage. *Sint Mæcenates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones.* Consulting Grant's "Observations on the Bills of Mortality" (4th edition, Oxford, 1665), I find, that, out of 229,250, who died in London during one period of twenty years in the seventeenth century, not more than eighty-six were murdered; that is, about four three-tenths per annum. A small number this, gentlemen, to found an academy upon; and certainly, where the quantity is so small, we have a right to expect that the quality should be first-rate. Perhaps it was; yet still I am of opinion that the best artist in this century was not equal to the best in that which followed. For instance, however praiseworthy the

case of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey may be (and nobody can be more sensible of its merits than I am), still, I cannot consent to place it on a level with that of Mrs. Ruscombe of Bristol, either as to originality of design, or boldness and breadth of style. This good lady's murder took place early in the reign of George III.—a reign which was notoriously favourable to the arts generally. She lived in College Green, with a single maid-servant, neither of them having any pretension to the notice of history but what they derived from the great artist whose workmanship I am recording. One fine morning, when all Bristol was alive and in motion, some suspicion arising, the neighbours forced an entrance into the house, and found Mrs. Ruscombe murdered in her bedroom, and the servant murdered on the stairs: this was at noon; and, not more than two hours before, both mistress and servant had been seen alive. To the best of my remembrance, this was in 1764; upwards of sixty years, therefore, have now elapsed, and yet the artist is still undiscovered. The suspicions of posterity have settled upon two pretenders—a baker and a chimney-sweeper. But posterity is wrong; no unpractised artist could have conceived so bold an idea as that of a noonday murder in the heart of a great city. It was no obscure baker, gentlemen, or anonymous chimney-sweeper, be assured, that executed this work. I know who it was. (*Here there was a general buzz, which at length broke out into open applause; upon which the lecturer blushed, and went on with much earnestness.*) For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, do not mistake me; it was not I that did it. I have not the vanity to think myself equal to any such achievement; be assured that you greatly overrate my poor talents; Mrs. Ruscombe's affair was far beyond my slender abilities. But I came to know who the artist was, from a celebrated surgeon who assisted at his dissection. This gentleman had a private museum in the way of his profession, one corner of which was occupied by a cast from a man of remarkably fine proportions.

“That,” said the surgeon, “is a cast from the celebrated Lancashire highwayman, who concealed his profession for some time from his neighbours, by drawing woollen stockings over his horse's legs, and in that way muffling the clatter which he must else have made in riding up a flagged alley that led to his stable. At the time of his execution for highway robbery, I was studying under Cruickshank: and the man's figure was so uncommonly fine, that no

money or exertion was spared to get into possession of him with the least possible delay. By the connivance of the under-sheriff, he was cut down within the legal time, and instantly put into a chaise-and-four; so that, when he reached Cruickshanks's, he was positively not dead. Mr. —, a young student at that time, had the honour of giving him the *coup de grâce*, and finishing the sentence of the law." This remarkable anecdote, which seemed to imply that all the gentlemen in the dissecting-room were amateurs of our class, struck me a good deal; and I was repeating it one day to a Lancashire lady, who thereupon informed me, that she had herself lived in the neighbourhood of that highwayman, and well remembered two circumstances, which combined, in the opinion of all his neighbours, to fix upon him the credit of Mrs. Ruscombe's affair. One was, the fact of his absence for a whole fortnight at the period of that murder; the other, that, within a very little time after, the neighbourhood of this highwayman was deluged with dollars: now, Mrs. Ruscombe was known to have hoarded about two thousand of that coin. Be the artist, however, who he might, the affair remains a durable monument of his genius; for such was the impression of awe, and the sense of power left behind, by the strength of conception manifested in this murder, that no tenant (as I was told in 1810) had been found up to that time for Mrs. Ruscombe's house.

But, whilst I thus eulogise the Ruscombian case, let me not be supposed to overlook the many other specimens of extraordinary merit spread over the face of this century. Such cases, indeed, as that of Miss Bland, or of Captain Donnellan, and Sir Theophilus Boughton, shall never have any countenance from me. Fie on these dealers in poison, say I: can they not keep to the old honest way of cutting throats, without introducing such abominable innovations from Italy? I consider all these poisoning cases, compared with the legitimate style, as no better than wax-work by the side of sculpture, or a lithographic print by the side of a fine Volpato. But, dismissing these, there remain many excellent works of art in a pure style, such as nobody need be ashamed to own; and this every candid connoisseur will admit. *Candid*, observe, I say; for great allowances must be made in these cases; no artist can ever be sure of carrying through his own fine preconceptions. Awkward disturbances will arise; people will not submit to have their throats cut quietly; they will run, they will kick,

they will bite ; and whilst the portrait painter often has to complain of too much torpor in his subject, the artist in our line is generally embarrassed by too much animation. At the same time, however disagreeable to the artist, this tendency in murder to excite and irritate the subject is certainly one of its advantages to the world in general, which we ought not to overlook, since it favours the development of latent talent. Jeremy Taylor notices with admiration the extraordinary leaps which people will take under the influence of fear. There was a striking instance of this in the recent case of the M'Keans : the boy cleared a height, such as he will never clear again to his dying day. Talents also of the most brilliant description for thumping, and, indeed, for all the gymnastic exercises, have sometimes been developed by the panic which accompanies our artists ; talents else buried and hid under a bushel, to the possessors, as much as to their friends. I remember an interesting illustration of this fact, in a case which I learned in Germany.

Riding one day in the neighbourhood of Munich, I overtook a distinguished amateur of our society, whose name, for obvious reasons, I shall conceal. This gentleman informed me that, finding himself wearied with the frigid pleasures (such he esteemed them) of mere amateurship, he had quitted England for the Continent—meaning to practise a little professionally. For this purpose he resorted to Germany, conceiving the police in that part of Europe to be more heavy and drowsy than elsewhere. His *début* as a practitioner took place at Mannheim ; and, knowing me to be a brother amateur, he freely communicated the whole of his maiden adventure. “ Opposite to my lodging,” said he, “ lived a baker : he was somewhat of a miser, and lived quite alone. Whether it were his great expanse of chalky face, or what else, I know not, but the fact was, I ‘fancied’ him, and resolved to commence business upon his throat, which, by the way, he always carried bare—a fashion which is very irritating to my desires. Precisely at eight o’clock in the evening, I observed that he regularly shut up his windows. One night I watched him when thus engaged—bolted in after him—locked the door—and, addressing him with great suavity, acquainted him with the nature of my errand ; at the same time advising him to make no resistance, which would be mutually unpleasant. So saying, I drew out my tools ; and was proceeding to operate. , But at this spectacle the

baker, who seemed to have been struck by catalepsy at my first announcement, awoke into tremendous agitation. 'I will *not* be murdered!' he shrieked aloud; 'what for will I' (meaning *shall* I) 'lose my precious throat?'—'What for?' said I; 'if for no other reason, for this—that you put alum into your bread. But no matter, alum or no alum (for I was resolved to forestall any argument on that point), know that I am a virtuoso in the art of murder—am desirous of improving myself in its details—and am enamoured of your vast surface of throat, to which I am determined to be a customer.'—'Is it so?' said he, 'but I'll find you a customer in another line'; and so saying, he threw himself into a boxing attitude. The very idea of his boxing struck me as ludicrous. It is true, a London baker had distinguished himself in the ring, and became known to fame under the title of the Master of the Rolls; but he was young and unspoiled: whereas, this man was a monstrous feather-bed in person, fifty years old, and totally out of condition. Spite of all this, however, and contending against me, who am a master in the art, he made so desperate a defence, that many times I feared he might turn the tables upon me; and that I, an amateur, might be murdered by a rascally baker. What a situation! Minds of sensibility will sympathise with my anxiety. How severe it was, you may understand by this, that for the first thirteen rounds the baker positively had the advantage. *Round the 14th*, I received a blow on the right eye, which closed it up; in the end, I believe, this was my salvation; for the anger it roused in me was so great, that, in the next, and every one of the three following rounds, I floored the baker.

"*Round 19th*. The baker came up piping, and manifestly the worse for wear. His geometrical exploits in the four last rounds had done him no good. However, he showed some skill in stopping a message which I was sending to his cadaverous mug; in delivering which, my foot slipped, and I went down.

"*Round 20th*. Surveying the baker, I became ashamed of having been so much bothered by a shapeless mass of dough; and I went in fiercely, and administered some severe punishment. A rally took place—both went down—baker undermost—ten to three on amateur.

"*Round 21st*. The baker jumped up with surprising agility; indeed, he managed his pins capitally, and fought wonderfully, considering that he was drenched in perspira-

tion; but the shine was now taken out of him, and his game was the mere effect of panic. It was now clear that he could not last much longer. In the course of this round we tried the weaving system, in which I had greatly the advantage, and hit him repeatedly on the konk. My reason for this was, that his konk was covered with carbuncles; and I thought I should vex him by taking such liberties with his konk, which in fact I did.

"The three next rounds, the master of the rolls staggered about like a cow on the ice. Seeing how matters stood, in round 24th I whispered something into his ear, which sent him down like a shot. It was nothing more than my private opinion of the value of his throat at an annuity office. This little confidential whisper affected him greatly; the very perspiration was frozen on his face, and for the next two rounds I had it all my own way. And when I called *time* for the 27th round, he lay like a log on the floor."

After which, said I to the amateur, "It may be presumed that you accomplished your purpose." "You are right," said he, mildly, "I did; and a great satisfaction, you know, it was to my mind, for by this means I killed two birds with one stone"; meaning that he had both thumped the baker and murdered him. Now, for the life of me, I could not see *that*; for, on the contrary, to my mind it appeared that he had taken two stones to kill one bird, having been obliged to take the conceit out of him first with his fist, and then with his tools. But no matter for his logic. The moral of his story was good, for it showed what an astonishing stimulus to latent talent is contained in any reasonable prospect of being murdered. A pursy, unwieldy, half cataleptic baker of Mannheim had absolutely fought seven-and-twenty rounds with an accomplished English boxer, merely upon this inspiration; so greatly was natural genius exalted and sublimed by the genial presence of his murderer.

Really, gentlemen, when one hears of such things as these, it becomes a duty, perhaps, a little to soften that extreme asperity with which most men speak of murder. To hear people talk, you would suppose that all the disadvantages and inconveniences were on the side of being murdered, and that there were none at all in *not* being murdered. But considerate men think otherwise. "Certainly," says Jeremy Taylor, "it is a less temporal evil to fall by the rudeness of a sword than the violence of a fever;

and the axe" (to which he might have added the ship-carpenter's mallet and the crowbar), "a much less affliction than a strangury." Very true; the bishop talks like a wise man and an amateur, as I am sure he was; and another great philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, was equally above the vulgar prejudices on this subject. He declares it to be one of "the noblest functions of reason to know whether it is time to walk out of the world or not." (Book iii., *Colliers' Translation*.) No sort of knowledge being rarer than this, surely *that* man must be a most philanthropic character, who undertakes to instruct people in this branch of knowledge gratis, and at no little hazard to himself. All this, however, I throw out only in the way of speculation to future moralists; declaring in the meantime my own private conviction, that very few men commit murder upon philanthropic or patriotic principles, and repeating what I have already said once at least—that, as to the majority of murderers, they are very incorrect characters.

With respect to the Williams' murders, the sublimest and most entire in their excellence that ever were committed, I shall not allow myself to speak incidentally. Nothing less than an entire lecture, or even an entire course of lectures, would suffice to expound their merits.* But one curious fact connected with his case I shall mention, because it seems to imply that the blaze of his genius absolutely dazzled the eye of criminal justice. You all remember, I doubt not, that the instruments with which he executed his first great work (the murder of the Marrs) were a ship-carpenter's mallet and a knife. Now, the mallet belonged to an old Swede, one John Petersen, and bore his initials. This instrument Williams left behind him in Marr's house, and it fell into the hands of the magistrates. But, gentlemen, it is a fact that the publication of this circumstance of the initials led immediately to the apprehension of Williams, and, if made earlier, would have prevented his second great work (the murder of the Williamsons), which took place precisely twelve days after. Yet the magistrates kept back this fact from the public for the entire twelve days, and until that second work was accomplished. That finished, they published it, apparently feeling that Williams had now done enough for his fame, and that his glory was at length placed beyond the reach of accident.

As to Mr. Thurtell's case, I know not what to say. Natur-

* See the *Postscript* at the end of this paper.

ally, I have every disposition to think highly of my predecessor in the chair of this society; and I acknowledge that his lectures were unexceptionable. But, speaking ingenuously, I do really think that his principal performance, as an artist, has been much overrated. I admit, that at first I was myself carried away by the general enthusiasm. On the morning when the murder was made known in London, there was the fullest meeting of amateurs that I have ever known since the days of Williams; old bedridden connoisseurs, who had got into a peevish way of sneering and complaining "that there was nothing doing," now hobbled down to our club-room: such hilarity, such benign expression of general satisfaction, I have rarely witnessed. On every side you saw people shaking hands, congratulating each other, and forming dinner parties for the evening; and nothing was to be heard but triumphant challenges of—"Well! will *this* do?" "Is *this* the right thing?" "Are you satisfied at last?" But, in the middle of the row, I remember, we all grew silent, on hearing the old cynical amateur L. S.—stumping along with his wooden leg; he entered the room with his usual scowl; and, as he advanced, he continued to growl and stutter the whole way—"Mere plagiarism—base plagiarism from hints that I threw out! Besides, his style is as harsh as Albert Durer, and as coarse as Fuseli." Many thought that this was mere jealousy, and general waspishness; but I confess that, when the first glow of enthusiasm had subsided, I have found most judicious critics to agree that there was something *falsetto* in the style of Thurtell. The fact is, he was a member of our society, which naturally gave a friendly bias to our judgments; and his person was universally familiar to the "fancy," which gave him, with the whole London public, a temporary popularity, that his pretensions are not capable of supporting; for *opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat*. There was, however, an unfinished design of Thurtell's for the murder of a man with a pair of dumb-bells, which I admired greatly; it was a mere outline, that he never filled in; but to my mind it seemed every way superior to his chief work. I remember that there was great regret expressed by some amateurs that this sketch should have been left in an unfinished state: but there I cannot agree with them; for the fragments and first bold outlines of original artists have often a felicity about them which is apt to vanish in the management of the details.

The case of the M'Keans * I consider far beyond the vaunted performance of Thurtell—indeed, above all praise; and bearing that relation, in fact, to the immortal works of Williams, which the “Æneid” bears to the “Iliad.”

But it is now time that I should say a few words about the principles of murder, not with a view to regulate your practice, but your judgment: as to old women, and the mob of newspaper readers, they are pleased with anything, provided it is bloody enough. But the mind of sensibility requires something more. *First*, then, let us speak of the kind of person who is adapted to the purpose of the murderer; *secondly*, of the place where; *thirdly*, of the time when, and other little circumstances.

As to the person, I suppose it is evident that he ought to be a good man; because, if he were not, he might himself, by possibility, be contemplating murder at the very time; and such “diamond-cut-diamond” tussles, though pleasant enough where nothing better is stirring, are really not what a critic can allow himself to call murders. I could mention some people (I name no names) who have been murdered by other people in a dark lane; and so far all seemed correct enough; but, on looking farther into the matter, the public have become aware that the murdered party was himself, at the moment, planning to rob his murderer, at the least, and possibly to murder him, if he had been strong enough. Whenever that is the case, or may be thought to be the case, farewell to all the genuine effects of the art. For the final purpose of murder, considered as a fine art, is precisely the same as that of tragedy, in Aristotle's account of it; viz., “to cleanse the heart by means of pity and terror.” Now, terror there may be, but how can there be any pity for one tiger destroyed by another tiger?

It is also evident that the person selected ought not to be a public character. For instance, no judicious artist would have attempted to murder Abraham Newland.† For the case was this: everybody read so much about Abraham

* See the *Postscript*.

† Abraham Newland is now utterly forgotten. But when this was written, his name had not ceased to ring in British ears, as the most familiar and most significant that perhaps has ever existed. It was the name which appeared on the face of all Bank of England notes, great or small; and had been, for more than a quarter of a century (especially through the whole career of the French Revolution), a short-hand expression for paper money in its safest form.

Newland, and so few people ever saw him, that to the general belief he was a mere abstract idea. And I remember, that once, when I happened to mention that I had dined at a coffee-house in company with Abraham Newland, everybody looked scornfully at me, as though I had pretended to have played at billiards with Prester John, or to have had an affair of honour with the Pope. And, by the way, the Pope would be a very improper person to murder : for he has such a virtual ubiquity as the father of Christendom, and, like the cuckoo, is so often heard but never seen, that I suspect most people regard *him* also as an abstract idea. Where, indeed, a public man is in the habit of giving dinners, "with every delicacy of the season," the case is very different : every person is satisfied that *he* is no abstract idea ; and, therefore, there can be no impropriety in murdering him ; only that his murder will fall into the class of assassinations, which I have not yet treated.

Thirdly, The subject chosen ought to be in good health : for it is absolutely barbarous to murder a sick person, who is usually quite unable to bear it. On this principle, no tailor ought to be chosen who is above twenty-five, for after that age he is sure to be dyspeptic. Or at least, if a man will hunt in that warren, he will of course think it his duty, on the old established equation, to murder some multiple of 9—say 18, 27, or 36. And here, in this benign attention to the comfort of sick people, you will observe the usual effect of a fine art to soften and refine the feelings. The world in general, gentlemen, are very bloody-minded ; and all they want in a murder is a copious effusion of blood ; gaudy display in this point is enough for *them*. But the enlightened connoisseur is more refined in his taste ; and from our art, as from all the other liberal arts when thoroughly mastered, the result is, to humanise the heart ; so true is it, that

"Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."

A philosophic friend, well known for his philanthropy and general benignity, suggests that the subject chosen ought also to have a family of young children wholly dependent on his exertions, by way of deepening the pathos. And, undoubtedly, this is a judicious caution. Yet I would not insist too keenly on such a condition. Severe good taste unquestionably suggests it ; but still, where the man was otherwise unobjectionable in point of morals and

health, I would not look with too curious a jealousy to a restriction which might have the effect of narrowing the artist's sphere.

So much for the person. As to the time, the place, and the tools, I have many things to say, which at present I have no room for. The good sense of the practitioner has usually directed him to night and privacy. Yet there have not been wanting cases where this rule was departed from with excellent effect. In respect to time, Mrs. Ruscombe's case is a beautiful exception, which I have already noticed; and in respect both to time and place, there is a fine exception in the annals of Edinburgh (year 1805), familiar to every child in Edinburgh, but which has unaccountably been defrauded of its due portion of fame amongst English amateurs. The case I mean is that of a porter to one of the banks, who was murdered, whilst carrying a bag of money, in broad daylight, on turning out of the High Street, one of the most public streets in Europe; and the murderer is to this hour undiscovered.

“Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus,
Singula dum capti circumvectamur amore.”

And now, gentlemen, in conclusion, let me again solemnly disclaim all pretensions on my own part to the character of a professional man. I never attempted any murder in my life, except in the year 1801, upon the body of a tom-cat; and *that* turned out differently from my intention. My purpose, I own, was downright murder. “Semper ego auditor tantum?” said I, “nunquamne reponam?” And I went downstairs in search of Tom at one o'clock on a dark night, with the “animus,” and no doubt with the fiendish looks, of a murderer. But when I found him, he was in the act of plundering the pantry of bread and other things. Now this gave a new turn to the affair; for the time being one of general scarcity, when even Christians were reduced to the use of potato-bread, rice-bread, and all sorts of things, it was downright treason in a tom-cat to be wasting good wheaten-bread in the way he was doing. It instantly became a patriotic duty to put him to death; and, as I raised aloft and shook the glittering steel, I fancied myself rising, like Brutus, effulgent from a crowd of patriots, and, as I stabbed him, I

“Call'd aloud on Tully's name,
And bade the father of his country hail!”

Since then, what wandering thoughts I may have had

of attempting the life of an ancient ewe, of a superannuated hen, and such "small deer," are locked up in the secrets of my own breast ; but, for the higher departments of the art, I confess myself to be utterly unfit. My ambition does not rise so high. No, gentlemen, in the words of Horace,

"Fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi."

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPER

ON MURDER

CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE FINE ARTS

A GOOD many years ago, the reader may remember that I came forward in the character of a *dilettante* in murder. Perhaps *dilettante* is too strong a word. *Connoisseur* is better suited to the scruples and infirmity of public taste. I suppose there is no harm in *that*, at least. A man is not bound to put his eyes, ears, and understanding into his breeches-pocket when he meets with a murder. If he is not in a downright comatose state, I suppose he must see that one murder is better or worse than another, in point of good taste. Murders have their little differences and shades of merit, as well as statues, pictures, oratorios, cameos, intaglios, or what not. You may be angry with the man for talking too much, or too publicly (as to the too much, that I deny—a man can never cultivate his taste too highly); but you must allow him to think, at any rate. Well, would you believe it? all my neighbours came to hear of that little æsthetic essay which I had published; and, unfortunately, hearing at the very same time of a club that I was connected with, and a dinner at which I presided—both tending to the same little object as the essay, viz., the diffusion of a just taste among Her* Majesty's subjects, they got up the most barbarous calumnies against me. In particular, they said that I, or that the club (which comes to the same thing), had offered bounties on well-conducted homicides—with a scale of drawbacks, in case of any one defect or flaw, according to a table issued to private friends. Now, let me tell the whole truth about the dinner and the club, and it will be seen how malicious the world is. But first, confidentially, allow me to say what my real principles are upon the matter in question.

As to murder, I never committed one in my life. It's

* *Her Majesty*:—In the lecture, having occasion to refer to the reigning sovereign, I said "*His Majesty*;" for at that time William IV. was on the throne: but between the lecture and this supplement had occurred the accession of our present Queen.

a well-known thing amongst all my friends. I can get a paper to certify as much, signed by lots of people. Indeed, if you come to that, I doubt whether many people could produce as strong a certificate. Mine would be as big as a breakfast tablecloth. There is indeed one member of the club, who pretends to say he caught me once making too free with his throat on a club night, after everybody else had retired. But, observe, he shuffles in his story according to his state of civilisation. When not far gone, he contents himself with saying that he caught me ogling his throat; and that I was melancholy for some weeks after, and that my voice sounded in a way expressing, to the nice ear of a connoisseur, *the sense of opportunities lost*; but the club all know that he is a disappointed man himself, and that he speaks querulously at times about the fatal neglect of a man's coming abroad without his tools. Besides, all this is an affair between two amateurs, and everybody makes allowances for little asperities and fibs in such a case. "But," say you, "if no murderer, you may have encouraged, or even have bespoken a murder." No, upon my honour—no. And that was the very point I wished to argue for your satisfaction. The truth is, I am a very particular man in everything relating to murder; and perhaps I carry my delicacy too far. The Stagirite most justly, and possibly with a view to my case, placed virtue in the τὸ μέσον, or middle point between two extremes. A golden mean is certainly what every man should aim at. But it is easier talking than doing; and, my infirmity being notoriously too much milkiness of heart, I find it difficult to maintain that steady equatorial line between the two poles of too much murder on the one hand, and too little on the other. I am too soft—and people get excused through me—nay, go through life without an attempt made upon them, that ought *not* to be excused. I believe, if I had the management of things, there would hardly be a murder from year's end to year's end. In fact, I'm for peace, and quietness, and fawningness, and what may be styled *knocking-underness*. A man came to me as a candidate for the place of my servant, just then vacant. He had the reputation of having dabbled a little in our art; some said, not without merit. What startled me, however, was, that he supposed this art to be part of his regular duties in my service, and talked of having it considered in his wages. Now, that was a thing I would not allow; so I said at once, "Richard (or James, as the case might

be), you misunderstand my character. If a man will and must practise this difficult (and allow me to add, dangerous) branch of art—if he has an overruling genius for it, why, in that case, all I say is, that he might as well pursue his studies whilst living in my service as in another's. And also, I may observe, that it can do no harm either to himself or to the subject on whom he operates, that he should be guided by men of more taste than himself. Genius may do much, but long study of the art must always entitle a man to offer advice. So far I will go—general principles I will suggest. But as to any particular case, once for all I will have nothing to do with it. Never tell me of any special work of art you are meditating—I set my face against it *in toto*. For, if once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination. Once begin upon this downward path, you never know where you are to stop. Many a man has dated his ruin from some murder or other that perhaps he thought little of at the time. *Principiis obsta*—that's my rule." Such was my speech, and I have always acted up to it; so, if that is not being virtuous, I should be glad to know what is. But now about the dinner and the club. The club was not particularly of my creation; it arose pretty much as other similar associations, for the propagation of truth and the communication of new ideas; rather from the necessities of things, than upon any one man's suggestion. As to the dinner, if any man more than another could be held responsible for that, it was a member known amongst us by the name of *Toad-in-the-hole*. He was so called from his gloomy misanthropical disposition, which led him into constant disparagements of all modern murders as vicious abortions, belonging to no authentic school of art. The finest performances of our own age he snarled at cynically; and at length this querulous humour grew upon him so much, and he became so notorious as a *laudator temporis acti*, that few people cared to seek his society. This made him still more fierce and truculent. He went about muttering and growling; wherever you met him, he was soliloquising, and saying, "despicable pretender—without grouping—without two ideas upon handling—without"—and there you lost him. At length existence seemed to be painful to him; he rarely spoke, he seemed conversing with phantoms in the air;

his housekeeper informed us that his reading was nearly confined to "God's Revenge upon Murder," by Reynolds, and a more ancient book of the same title, noticed by Sir Walter Scott in his "Fortunes of Nigel." Sometimes, perhaps, he might read in the "Newgate Calendar" down to the year 1788, but he never looked into a book more recent. In fact, he had a theory with regard to the French Revolution, as having been the great cause of degeneration in murder. "Very soon, sir," he used to say, "men will have lost the art of killing poultry: the very rudiments of the art will have perished!" In the year 1811, he retired from general society. Toad-in-the-hole was no more seen in any public resort. We missed him from his wonted haunts—"nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he." By the side of the main conduit his listless length at noontide he would stretch, and pore upon the filth that muddled by. "Even dogs," this pensive moralist would say, "are not what they were, sir—not what they should be. I remember in my grandfather's time that some dogs had an idea of murder. I have known a mastiff, sir, that lay in ambush for a rival, yes, sir, and finally murdered him, with pleasing circumstances of good taste. I also was on intimate terms of acquaintance with a tom-cat that was an assassin. But now"—and then, the subject growing too painful, he dashed his hand to his forehead, and went off abruptly in a homeward direction towards his favourite conduit, where he was seen by an amateur in such a state, that he thought it dangerous to address him. Soon after Toad shut himself entirely up; it was understood that he had resigned himself to melancholy; and at length the prevailing notion was, that Toad-in-the-hole had hanged himself.

The world was wrong *there*, as it had been on some other questions. Toad-in-the-hole might be sleeping, but dead he was not; and of that we soon had ocular proof. One morning in 1812, an amateur surprised us with the news that he had seen Toad-in-the-hole brushing with hasty steps the dews away, to meet the postman by the conduit side. Even that was something: how much more, to hear that he had shaved his beard—had laid aside his sad-coloured clothes, and was adorned like a bridegroom of ancient days. What could be the meaning of all this? Was Toad-in-the-hole mad? or how? Soon after the secret was explained—in more than a figurative sense "the murder was out." For in came the London morning

papers, by which it appeared that but three days before a murder, the most superb of the century by many degrees, had occurred in the heart of London. I need hardly say, that this was the great exterminating *chef-d'œuvre* of Williams at Mr. Marr's, No. 29 Ratcliffe Highway. That was the *début* of the artist; at least for anything the public knew. What occurred at Mr. Williamson's twelve nights afterwards—the second work turned out from the same chisel—some people pronounced even superior. But Toad-in-the-hole always “reclaimed,” he was even angry, at such comparisons. “This vulgar *goût de comparaison*, as La Bruyère calls it,” he would often remark, “will be our ruin; each work has its own separate characteristics—each in and for itself is incomparable. One, perhaps, might suggest the ‘Iliad’—the other the ‘Odyssey’: but what do you get by such comparisons? Neither ever was, or will be surpassed; and when you’ve talked for hours, you must still come back to that.” Vain, however, as all criticism might be, he often said that volumes might be written on each case for itself; and he even proposed to publish in quarto on the subject.

Meantime, how had Toad-in-the-hole happened to hear of this great work of art so early in the morning? He had received an account by express, despatched by a correspondent in London, who watched the progress of art on *Toad's* behalf, with a general commission to send off a special express, at whatever cost, in the event of any estimable works appearing. The express arrived in the night-time; Toad-in-the-hole was then gone to bed; he had been muttering and grumbling for hours, but of course he was called up. On reading the account, he threw his arms round the express, declared him his brother and his preserver, and expressed his regret at not having it in his power to knight him. We, amateurs, having heard that he was abroad, and therefore had *not* hanged himself, made sure of soon seeing him amongst us. Accordingly he soon arrived; seized every man's hand as he passed him—wrung it almost frantically, and kept ejaculating, “Why, now, here's something like a murder!—this is the real thing—this is genuine—this is what you can approve, can recommend to a friend: this—says every man, on reflection—this is the thing that ought to be! Such works are enough to make us all young.” And in fact the general opinion is, that Toad-in-the-hole would have died but for this regeneration of art, which he called a second age of

Leo the Tenth ; and it was our duty, he said, solemnly to commemorate it. At present, and *en attendant*, he proposed that the club should meet and dine together. A dinner, therefore, was given by the club ; to which all amateurs were invited from a distance of one hundred miles.

Of this dinner, there are ample short-hand notes amongst the archives of the club. But they are not "extended," to speak diplomatically ; and the reporter, who only could give the whole report *in extenso*, is missing—I believe murdered. Meantime, in years long after that day, and on an occasion perhaps equally interesting, viz., the turning up of Thugs and Thuggism, another dinner was given. Of this I myself kept notes, for fear of another accident to the short-hand reporter. And I here subjoin them. Toad-in-the-hole, I must mention, was present at this dinner. In fact, it was one of its sentimental incidents. Being as old as the valleys at the dinner of 1812, naturally he was as old as the hills at the Thug dinner of 1838. He had taken to wearing his beard again ; why, or with what view, it passes my persimmon to tell you. But so it was. And his appearance was most benign and venerable. Nothing could equal the angelic radiance of his smile, as he inquired after the unfortunate reporter (whom, as a piece of private scandal, I should tell you that he was himself supposed to have murdered, in a rapture of creative art) : the answer was, with roars of laughter, from the under-sheriff of our county—"Non est inventus." Toad-in-the-hole laughed outrageously at this : in fact, we all thought he was choking ; and, at the earnest request of the company, a musical composer furnished a most beautiful glee upon the occasion, which was sung five times after dinner, with universal applause and inextinguishable laughter, the words being these (and the chorus so contrived, as most beautifully to mimic the peculiar laughter of Toad-in-the-hole) :—

"Et interrogatum est à Toad-in-the-hole—Ubi est ille reporter ?
Et responsum est cum cachinno—Non est inventus."

Chorus

"Deinde iteratum est ab omnibus, cum cachinnatione undulante, trepidante—Non est inventus."

Toad-in-the-hole, I ought to mention, about nine years before, when an express from Edinburgh brought him the earliest intelligence of the Burke-and-Hare revolution in the art, went mad upon the spot ; and, instead of a pension

to the express for even one life, or a knighthood, endeavoured to Burke him ; in consequence of which he was put into a strait-waistcoat. And that was the reason we had no dinner then. But now all of us were alive and kicking, strait-waistcoaters and others ; in fact, not one absentee was reported upon the entire roll. There were also many foreign amateurs present.

Dinner being over, and the cloth drawn, there was a general call made for the new glee of *Non est inventus* ; but, as this would have interfered with the requisite gravity of the company during the earlier toasts, I overruled the call. After the national toasts had been given, the first official toast of the day was, *The Old Man of the Mountains*—drunk in solemn silence.

Toad-in-the-hole returned thanks in a neat speech. He likened himself to the Old Man of the Mountains, in a few brief allusions, that made the company yell with laughter ; and he concluded with giving the health of

Mr. Von Hammer, with many thanks to him for his learned History of the Old Man and his subjects the assassins.

Upon this I rose and said, that doubtless most of the company were aware of the distinguished place assigned by orientlists to the very learned Turkish scholar, Von Hammer the Austrian ; that he had made the profoundest researches into our art, as connected with those early and eminent artists, the Syrian assassins in the period of the Crusaders ; that his work had been for several years deposited, as a rare treasure of art, in the library of the club. Even the author's name, gentlemen, pointed him out as the historian of our art—Von Hammer——

“ Yes, yes,” interrupted Toad-in-the-hole, “ Von Hammer—he's the man for a *malleus hæreticorum*. You all know what consideration Williams bestowed on the hammer, or the ship-carpenter's mallet, which is the same thing. Gentlemen, I give you another great hammer—Charles the Hammer, the Marteau, or, in old French, the Martel—he hammered the Saracens till they were all as dead as door-nails.”

“ *Charles the Hammer*, with all the honours.”

But the expulsion of Toad-in-the-hole, together with the uproarious cheers for the grandpapa of Charlemagne, had now made the company unmanageable. The orchestra was again challenged with shouts the stormiest for the new glee. I foresaw a tempestuous evening ; and I ordered

myself to be strengthened with three waiters on each side ; the vice-president with as many. Symptoms of unruly enthusiasm were beginning to show out ; and I own that I myself was considerably excited, as the orchestra opened with its storm of music, and the impassioned glee began—" Et interrogatum est à Toad-in-the-hole—Ubi est ille Reporter ? " And the frenzy of the passion became absolutely convulsing, as the full chorus fell in—" Et iteratum est ab omnibus—Non est inventus."

The next toast was—*The Jewish Sicarii*.

Upon which I made the following explanation to the company :—" Gentlemen, I am sure it will interest you all to hear that the assassins, ancient as they were, had a race of predecessors in the very same country. All over Syria, but particularly in Palestine, during the early years of the Emperor Nero, there was a band of murderers, who prosecuted their studies in a very novel manner. They did not practise in the night-time, or in lonely places ; but, justly considering that great crowds are in themselves a sort of darkness by means of the dense pressure, and the impossibility of finding out who it was that gave the blow, they mingled with mobs everywhere ; particularly at the great paschal feast in Jerusalem ; where they actually had the audacity, as Josephus assures us, to press into the temple—and whom should they choose for operating upon but Jonathan himself, the Pontifex Maximus ? They murdered him, gentlemen, as beautifully as if they had had him alone on a moonless night in a dark lane. And when it was asked, who was the murderer, and where he was——"

" Why, then, it was answered," interrupted Toad-in-the-hole, "' Non est inventus.' " And then, in spite of all I could do or say, the orchestra opened, and the whole company began—" Et interrogatum est à Toad-in-the-hole—Ubi est ille Sicarius ? Et responsum est ab omnibus—Non est inventus."

When the tempestuous chorus had subsided, I began again :—" Gentlemen, you will find a very circumstantial account of the Sicarii in at least three different parts of Josephus ; once in Book XX., sec. v., c. 8, of his ' Antiquities ' ; once in Book I. of his ' Wars ' : but in sec. x. of the chapter first cited you will find a particular description of their tooling. This is what he says :—" They tooled with small scimitars not much different from the Persian *acinacæ*, but more curved, and for all the world most like

the Roman semi-lunar *siccæ*.' It is perfectly magnificent, gentlemen, to hear the sequel of their history. Perhaps the only case on record where a regular army of murderers was assembled, a *justus exercitus*, was in the case of these *Sicarii*. They mustered in such strength in the wilderness, that Festus himself was obliged to march against them with the Roman legionary force. A pitched battle ensued; and this army of amateurs was all cut to pieces in the desert. Heavens, gentlemen, what a sublime picture! The Roman legions—the wilderness—Jerusalem in the distance—an army of murderers in the foreground!"

The next toast was—"To the further improvement of Tooling, and thanks to the Committee for their services."

Mr. L., on behalf of the Committee who had reported on that subject, returned thanks. He made an interesting extract from the report, by which it appeared how very much stress had been laid formerly on the mode of tooling by the fathers, both Greek and Latin. In confirmation of this pleasing fact, he made a very striking statement in reference to the earliest work of antediluvian art. Father Mersenne, that learned French Roman Catholic, in page one thousand four hundred and thirty-one * of his *opere* Commentary on Genesis, mentions, on the authority of several rabbis, that the quarrel of Cain with Abel was about a young woman; that, according to various accounts, Cain had tooled with his teeth (*Abelem fuisse morsibus dilaceratum à Cain*); according to many others, with the jaw-bone of an ass, which is the tooling adopted by most painters. But it is pleasing to the mind of sensibility to know that, as science expanded, sounder views were adopted. One author contends for a pitchfork, St. Chrysostom for a sword, Irenæus for a scythe, and Prudentius, the Christian poet of the fourth century, for a hedging-bill. This last writer delivers his opinion thus:—

"Frater, probatæ sanctitatis æmulus,
Germana curvo colla frangit sarculo":

i.e., his brother, jealous of his attested sanctity, fractures his fraternal throat with a curved hedging-bill. "All which is respectfully submitted by your committee, not so much as decisive of the question (for it is not), but in order to impress upon the youthful mind the importance

* "Page one thousand four hundred and thirty-one":—*literally*, good reader, and no joke at all.

which has ever been attached to the quality of the tooling by such men as Chrysostom and Irenæus."

"Irenæus, be hanged!" said Toad-in-the-hole, who now rose impatiently to give the next toast:—"Our Irish friends; wishing them a speedy revolution in their mode of tooling, as well as in everything else connected with the art!"

"Gentlemen, I'll tell you the plain truth. Every day of the year we take up a paper, we read the opening of a murder. We say, this is good, this is charming, this is excellent! But, behold you! scarcely have we read a little farther, before the word Tipperary or Ballina-something betrays the Irish manufacture. Instantly we loathe it; we call to the waiter; we say, 'Waiter, take away this paper; send it out of the house; it is absolutely a scandal in the nostrils of all just taste.' I appeal to every man, whether, on finding a murder (otherwise perhaps promising enough) to be Irish, he does not feel himself as much insulted as when, Madeira being ordered, he finds it to be Cape; or when, taking up what he takes to be a mushroom, it turns out what children call a toad-stool. Tithes, politics, something wrong in principle, vitiate every Irish murder. Gentlemen, this must be reformed, or Ireland will not be a land to live in; at least, if we do live there, we must import all our murders, that's clear." Toad-in-the-hole sat down, growling with suppressed wrath; and the uproarious "Hear, hear!" clamorously expressed the general concurrence.

The next toast was—"The sublime epoch of Burkism and Harism!"

This was drunk with enthusiasm; and one of the members, who spoke to the question, made a very curious communication to the company:—"Gentlemen, we fancy Burkism to be a pure invention of our own times: and in fact no Pancirollus has ever enumerated this branch of art when writing *de rebus deperditis*. Still, I have ascertained that the essential principle of this variety in the art was known to the ancients; although, like the art of painting upon glass, of making the myrrhine cups, etc., it was lost in the dark ages for want of encouragement. In the famous collection of Greek epigrams made by Planudes, is one upon a very fascinating case of Burkism: it is a perfect little gem of art. The epigram itself I cannot lay my hand upon at this moment; but the following is an abstract of it by Salmasius, as I find it in his notes on Vopiscus: 'Est et elegans epigramma Lucilii, ubi medicus

et pollinctor de compacto sic egerunt, ut medicus ægros omnes curæ suæ commissos occideret': this was the basis of the contract, you see, that on the one part the doctor, for himself and his assigns, doth undertake and contract duly and truly to murder all the patients committed to his charge: but why? There lies the beauty of the case — 'Et ut pollinctori amico suo traderet pollingendos.' The *pollinctor*, you are aware, was a person whose business it was to dress and prepare dead bodies for burial. The original ground of the transaction appears to have been sentimental: 'He was my friend,' says the murderous doctor; 'he was dear to me,' in speaking of the *pollinctor*. But the law, gentlemen, is stern and harsh: the law will not hear of these tender motives: to sustain a contract of this nature in law, it is essential that a 'consideration' should be given. Now what *was* the consideration? For thus far all is on the side of the *pollinctor*: he will be well paid for his services; but, meantime, the generous, the noble-minded doctor gets nothing. What *was* the equivalent, again I ask, which the law would insist on the doctor's taking, in order to establish that 'consideration,' without which the contract had no force? You shall hear: 'Et ut pollinctor vicissim τελαμῶνας quos furabatur de pollinctione mortuorum medico mitteret donis ad alliganda vulnera eorum quos curabat'; i.e., and that reciprocally the *pollinctor* should transmit to the physician, as free gifts for the binding-up of wounds in those whom he treated medically, the belts or trusses (τελαμῶνας) which he had succeeded in purloining in the course of his functions about the corpses.

"Now, the case is clear: the whole went on a principle of reciprocity which would have kept up the trade for ever. The doctor was also a surgeon: he could not murder *all* his patients: some of the patients must be retained intact. For these he wanted linen bandages. But, unhappily, the Romans wore woollen, on which account it was that they bathed so often. Meantime, there *was* linen to be had in Rome; but it was monstrously dear; and the τελαμῶνες, or linen swathing bandages, in which superstition obliged them to bind up corpses, would answer capitally for the surgeon. The doctor, therefore, contracts to furnish his friend with a constant succession of corpses, provided, and be it understood always, that his said friend, in return, should supply him with one-half of the articles he would receive from the friends of the parties murdered

or to be murdered. The doctor invariably recommended his invaluable friend the pollinctor (whom let us call the undertaker); the undertaker, with equal regard to the sacred rights of friendship, uniformly recommended the doctor. Like Pylades and Orestes, they were models of a perfect friendship: in their lives they were lovely: and on the gallows, it is to be hoped, they were not divided.

"Gentlemen, it makes me laugh horribly, when I think of those two friends drawing and re-drawing on each other: 'Pollinctor in account with Doctor, debtor by sixteen corpses: creditor by forty-five bandages, two of which damaged.' Their names unfortunately are lost; but I conceive they must have been Quintus Burkius and Publius Harius. By the way, gentlemen, has anybody heard lately of Hare? I understand he is comfortably settled in Ireland, considerably to the west, and does a little business now and then; but, as he observes with a sigh, only as a retailer—nothing like the fine thriving wholesale concern so carelessly blown up at Edinburgh. 'You see what comes of neglecting business'—is the chief moral, the ἐπιμύθιον, as Æsop would say, which Hare draws from his past experience."

At length came the toast of the day—*Thugdom in all its branches*.

The speeches attempted at this crisis of the dinner were past all counting. But the applause was so furious, the music so stormy, and the crashing of glasses so incessant, from the general resolution never again to drink an inferior toast from the same glass, that I am unequal to the task of reporting. Besides which, Toad-in-the-hole now became ungovernable. He kept firing pistols in every direction; sent his servant for a blunderbuss, and talked of loading with ball-cartridge. We conceived that his former madness had returned at the mention of Burke and Hare; or that, being again weary of life, he had resolved to go off in a general massacre. This we could not think of allowing; it became indispensable, therefore, to kick him out; which we did with universal consent, the whole company lending their toes *uno pede*, as I may say, though pitying his grey hairs and his angelic smile. During the operation, the orchestra poured in their old chorus. The universal company sang, and (what surprised us most of all) Toad-in-the-hole joined us furiously in singing—

"Et interrogatum est ab omnibus—Ubi est ille Toad-in-the-hole?
Et responsum est ab omnibus—Non est inventus."

POSTSCRIPT

It is impossible to conciliate readers of so saturnine and gloomy a class, that they cannot enter with genial sympathy into any gaiety whatever, but, least of all, when the gaiety trespasses a little into the province of the extravagant. In such a case, not to sympathise is not to understand; and the playfulness, which is not relished, becomes flat and insipid, or absolutely without meaning. Fortunately, after all such churls have withdrawn from my audience in high displeasure, there remains a large majority who are loud in acknowledging the amusement which they have derived from this little paper; at the same time proving the sincerity of their praise by one hesitating expression of censure. Repeatedly they have suggested to me, that perhaps the extravagance, though clearly intentional, and forming one element in the general gaiety of the conception, went too far. I am not myself of that opinion; and I beg to remind these friendly censors, that it is amongst the direct purposes and efforts of this *bagatelle* to graze the brink of horror, and of all that would in actual realisation be most repulsive. The very excess of the extravagance, in fact, by suggesting to the reader continually the mere aeriality of the entire speculation, furnishes the surest means of disenchanting him from the horror which might else gather upon his feelings. Let me remind such objectors, once for all, of Dean Swift's proposal for turning to account the supernumerary infants of the three kingdoms, which, in those days, both at Dublin and at London, were provided for in foundling hospitals, by cooking and eating them. This was an extravaganza, though really bolder and more coarsely practical than mine, which did not provoke any reproaches even to a dignitary of the supreme Irish church; its own monstrosity was its excuse; mere extravagance was felt to license and accredit the little *jeu d'esprit*, precisely as the blank impossibilities of Lilliput, of Laputa, of the Yahoos, etc., had licensed those. If, therefore, any man thinks it worth his while to tilt against so mere a foam-bubble of gaiety as this lecture on the æsthetics of murder, I shelter myself for the moment under the Telamonian shield of the Dean. But, in reality, which (to say the truth) formed one motive for detaining the reader by this Postscript, my own little

paper may plead a privileged excuse for its extravagance, such as is altogether wanting to the Dean's. Nobody can pretend, for a moment, on behalf of the Dean, that there is any ordinary and natural tendency in human thoughts, which could ever turn to infants as articles of diet ; under any conceivable circumstances, this would be felt as the most aggravated form of cannibalism—cannibalism applying itself to the most defenceless part of the species. But, on the other hand, the tendency to a critical or æsthetic valuation of fires and murders is universal. If you are summoned to the spectacle of a great fire, undoubtedly the first impulse is—to assist in putting it out. But that field of exertion is very limited, and is soon filled by regular professional people, trained and equipped for the service. In the case of a fire which is operating upon *private* property, pity for a neighbour's calamity checks us at first in treating the affair as a scenic spectacle. But perhaps the fire may be confined to public buildings. And in any case, after we have paid our tribute of regret to the affair, considered as a calamity, inevitably, and without restraint, we go on to consider it as a stage spectacle. Exclamations of—How grand ! how magnificent ! arise in a sort of rapture from the crowd. For instance, when Drury Lane was burned down in the first decennium of this century, the falling in of the roof was signalled by a mimic suicide of the protecting Apollo that surmounted and crested the centre of this roof. The god was stationary with his lyre, and seemed looking down upon the fiery ruins that were so rapidly approaching him. Suddenly the supporting timbers below him gave way ; a convulsive heave of the billowing flames seemed for a moment to raise the statue ; and then, as if on some impulse of despair, the presiding deity appeared not to fall, but to throw himself into the fiery deluge, for he went down head foremost ; and in all respects, the descent had the air of a voluntary act. What followed ? From every one of the bridges over the river, and from other open areas which commanded the spectacle, there arose a sustained uproar of admiration and sympathy. Some few years before this event, a prodigious fire occurred at Liverpool ; the *Goree*, a vast pile of warehouses close to one of the docks, was burned to the ground. The huge edifice, eight or nine storeys high, and laden with most combustible goods, many thousand bales of cotton, wheat and oats in thousands of quarters, tar, turpentine, rum, gunpowder, etc., continued through many hours of dark-

ness to feed this tremendous fire. To aggravate the calamity, it blew a regular gale of wind; luckily for the shipping, it blew inland, that is, to the east; and all the way down to Warrington, eighteen miles distant to the eastward, the whole air was illuminated by flakes of cotton, often saturated with rum, and by what seemed absolute worlds of blazing sparks, that lighted up all the upper chambers of the air. All the cattle lying abroad in the fields through a breadth of eighteen miles, were thrown into terror and agitation. Men, of course, read in this hurrying overhead of scintillating and blazing vortices, the annunciation of some gigantic calamity going on in Liverpool; and the lamentation on that account was universal. But that mood of public sympathy did not at all interfere to suppress or even to check the momentary bursts of rapturous admiration, as this arrowy sleet of many-coloured fire rode on the wings of the hurricane, alternately through open depths of air, or through dark clouds overhead.

Precisely the same treatment is applied to murders. After the first tribute of sorrow to those who have perished, but, at all events, after the personal interests have been tranquillised by time, inevitably the scenical features (what æsthetically may be called the comparative *advantages*) of the several murders are reviewed and valued. One murder is compared with another; and the circumstances of superiority, as, for example, in the incidence and effects of surprise, of mystery, etc., are collated and appraised. I, therefore, for *my* extravagance, claim an inevitable and perpetual ground in the spontaneous tendencies of the human mind when left to itself. But no one will pretend that any corresponding plea can be advanced on behalf of Swift.

In this important distinction between myself and the Dean, lies one reason which prompted the present Postscript. A second purpose of the Postscript is, to make the reader acquainted circumstantially with three memorable cases of murder, which long ago the voice of amateurs has crowned with laurel, but especially with the two earliest of the three, viz., the immortal Williams' murders of 1812. The act and the actor are each separately in the highest degree interesting; and, as forty-two years have elapsed since 1812, it cannot be supposed that either is known circumstantially to the men of the current generation.

Never, throughout the annals of universal Christendom, has there indeed been any act of one solitary insulated

individual, armed with power so appalling over the hearts of men, as that exterminating murder, by which, during the winter of 1812, John Williams, in one hour, smote two houses with emptiness, exterminated all but two entire households, and asserted his own supremacy over all the children of Cain. It would be absolutely impossible adequately to describe the frenzy of feelings which, throughout the next fortnight, mastered the popular heart ; the mere delirium of indignant horror in some, the mere delirium of panic in others. For twelve succeeding days, under some groundless notion that the unknown murderer had quitted London, the panic which had convulsed the mighty metropolis diffused itself all over the island. I was myself at that time nearly three hundred miles from London ; but there, and everywhere, the panic was indescribable. One lady, my next neighbour, whom personally I knew, living at the moment, during the absence of her husband, with a few servants in a very solitary house, never rested until she had placed eighteen doors (so she told me, and, indeed, satisfied me by ocular proof), each secured by ponderous bolts, and bars, and chains, between her own bedroom and any intruder of human build. To reach her, even in her drawing-room, was like going, as a flag of truce, into a beleaguered fortress ; at every sixth step one was stopped by a sort of portcullis. The panic was not confined to the rich ; women in the humblest ranks more than once died upon the spot, from the shock attending some suspicious attempts at intrusion upon the part of vagrants, meditating probably nothing worse than a robbery, but whom the poor women, misled by the London newspapers, had fancied to be the dreadful London murderer. Meantime, this solitary artist, that rested in the centre of London, self-supported by his own conscious grandeur, as a domestic Attila, or "scourge of God" ; this man, that walked in darkness, and relied upon murder (as afterwards transpired) for bread, for clothes, for promotion in life, was silently preparing an effectual answer to the public journals ; and on the twelfth day after his inaugural murder, he advertised his presence in London, and published to all men the absurdity of ascribing to *him* any ruralising propensities, by striking a second blow, and accomplishing a second family extermination. Somewhat lightened was the *provincial* panic by this proof that the murderer had not condescended to sneak into the country, or to abandon for a moment, under any motive of caution or fear, the great

metropolitan *castra stativa* of gigantic crime, seated for ever on the Thames. In fact, the great artist disdained a provincial reputation; and he must have felt, as a case of ludicrous disproportion, the contrast between a country town or village, on the one hand, and, on the other, a work more lasting than brass—a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰ*—a murder such in quality as any murder that *he* would condescend to own for a work turned out from his own *studio*.

Coleridge, whom I saw some months after these terrific murders, told me, that, for *his* part, though at the time resident in London, he had not shared in the prevailing panic; *him* they affected only as a philosopher, and threw him into a profound reverie upon the tremendous power which is laid open in a moment to any man who can reconcile himself to the abjuration of all conscientious restraints, if, at the same time, thoroughly without fear. Not sharing in the public panic, however, Coleridge did not consider that panic at all unreasonable; for, as he said most truly, in that vast metropolis there are many thousands of households, composed exclusively of women and children; many other thousands there are who necessarily confide their safety, in the long evenings, to the discretion of a young servant girl; and if she suffers herself to be beguiled by the pretence of a message from her mother, sister, or sweetheart, into opening the door, there, in one second of time, goes to wreck the security of the house. However, at that time, and for many months afterwards, the practice of steadily putting the chain upon the door before it was opened prevailed generally, and for a long time served as a record of that deep impression left upon London by Mr. Williams. Southey, I may add, entered deeply into the public feeling on this occasion, and said to me, within a week or two of the first murder, that it was a private event of that order which rose to the dignity of a national event.* But now, having prepared the reader to appreciate on its true scale this dreadful tissue of murder (which, as a record belonging to an era that is now left forty-two years behind us, not one person in four of this generation can be expected to know correctly), let me pass to the circumstantial details of the affair.

Yet, first of all, one word as to the local scene of the

* I am not sure whether Southey held at this time his appointment to the editorship of the "Edinburgh Annual Register." If he did, no doubt in the domestic section of that chronicle will be found an excellent account of the whole.

murders. Ratcliffe Highway is a public thoroughfare in a most chaotic quarter of eastern or nautical London; and at this time (*viz.*, in 1812), when no adequate police existed except the *detective* police of Bow Street, admirable for its own peculiar purposes, but utterly incommensurate to the general service of the capital, it was a most dangerous quarter. Every third man at the least might be set down as a foreigner. Lascars, Chinese, Moors, Negroes, were met at every step. And apart from the manifold ruffianism, shrouded impenetrably under the mixed hats and turbans of men whose past was untraceable to any European eye, it is well known that the navy (especially, in time of war, the commercial navy) of Christendom is the sure receptacle of all the murderers and ruffians whose crimes have given them a motive for withdrawing themselves for a season from the public eye. It is true, that few of this class are qualified to act as "able" seamen: but at all times, and especially during war, only a small proportion (or *nucleus*) of each ship's company consists of such men: the large majority being mere untutored landsmen. John Williams, however, who had been occasionally rated as a seaman on board of various Indiamen, etc., was probably a very accomplished seaman. Pretty generally, in fact, he was a ready and adroit man, fertile in resources under all sudden difficulties, and most flexibly adapting himself to all varieties of social life. Williams was a man of middle stature (five feet seven and a-half, to five feet eight inches high), slenderly built, rather thin, but wiry, tolerably muscular, and clear of all superfluous flesh. A lady, who saw him under examination (I think at the Thames Police Office), assured me that his hair was of the most extraordinary and vivid colour, *viz.*, bright yellow, something between an orange and a lemon colour. Williams had been in India; chiefly in Bengal and Madras; but he had also been upon the Indus. Now, it is notorious that, in the Punjaub, horses of a high caste are often painted—crimson, blue, green, purple; and it struck me that Williams might, for some casual purpose of disguise, have taken a hint from this practice of Scinde and Lahore, so that the colour might not have been natural. In other respects, his appearance was natural enough; and, judging by a plaster cast of him, which I purchased in London, I should say mean, as regarded his facial structure. One fact, however, was striking, and fell in with the impression of his natural tiger character, that his face wore at all times a bloodless ghastly pallor.

"You might imagine," said my informant, "that in his veins circulated not red life-blood, such as could kindle into the blush of shame, of wrath, of pity—but a green sap that welled from no human heart." His eyes seemed frozen and glazed, as if their light were all converged upon some victim lurking in the far background. So far his appearance might have repelled; but, on the other hand, the concurrent testimony of many witnesses, and also the silent testimony of facts, showed that the oiliness and snaky insinuation of his demeanour counteracted the repulsiveness of his ghastly face, and amongst inexperienced young women won for him a very favourable reception. In particular, one gentle-mannered girl, whom Williams had undoubtedly designed to murder, gave in evidence—that once, when sitting alone with her, he had said, "Now, Miss R., supposing that I should appear about midnight at your bedside, armed with a carving knife, what would you say?" To which the confiding girl had replied, "Oh, Mr. Williams, if it was anybody else, I should be frightened. But, as soon as I heard *your* voice, I should be tranquil." Poor girl! had this outline sketch of Mr. Williams been filled in and realised, she would have seen something in the corpse-like face, and heard something in the sinister voice, that would have unsettled her tranquillity for ever. But nothing short of such dreadful experiences could avail to unmask Mr. John Williams.

Into this perilous region it was that, on a Saturday night in December, Mr. Williams, whom we must suppose to have long since made his *coup d'essai*, forced his way through the crowded streets, bound on business. To say, was to do. And this night he had said to himself secretly, that he would execute a design which he had already sketched, and which, when finished, was destined on the following day to strike consternation into "all that mighty heart" of London, from centre to circumference. It was afterwards remembered that he had quitted his lodgings on this dark errand about eleven o'clock P.M.; not that he meant to begin so soon: but he needed to reconnoitre. He carried his tools closely buttoned up under his loose roomy coat. It was in harmony with the general subtlety of his character, and his polished hatred of brutality, that by universal agreement his manners were distinguished for exquisite suavity: the tiger's heart was masked by the most insinuating and snaky refinement. All his acquaintances afterwards described his dissimulation as so ready and so

perfect, that if, in making his way through the streets, always so crowded on a Saturday night in neighbourhoods so poor, he had accidentally jostled any person, he would (as they were all satisfied) have stopped to offer the most gentlemanly apologies: with his devilish heart brooding over the most hellish of purposes, he would yet have paused to express a benign hope that the huge mallet, buttoned up under his elegant surtout, with a view to the little business that awaited him about ninety minutes further on, had not inflicted any pain on the stranger with whom he had come into collision. Titian, I believe, but certainly Rubens, and perhaps Vandyke, made it a rule never to practise his art but in full dress—point ruffles, bag wig, and diamond-hilted sword: and Mr. Williams, there is reason to believe, when he went out for a grand compound massacre (in another sense, one might have applied to it the Oxford phrase of *going out as Grand Compounder*), always assumed black silk stockings and pumps; nor would he on any account have degraded his position as an artist by wearing a morning gown. In his second great performance, it was particularly noticed and recorded by the one sole trembling man, who under killing agonies of fear was compelled (as the reader will find) from a secret stand to become the solitary spectator of his atrocities, that Mr. Williams wore a long blue frock, of the very finest cloth, and richly lined with silk. Amongst the anecdotes which circulated about him, it was also said at the time, that Mr. Williams employed the first of dentists, and also the first of chiropodists. On no account would he patronise any second-rate skill. And beyond a doubt, in that perilous little branch of business which was practised by himself, he might be regarded as the most aristocratic and fastidious of artists.

But who meantime was the victim, to whose abode he was hurrying? For surely he never could be so indiscreet as to be sailing about on a roving cruise in search of some chance person to murder? Oh, no: he had suited himself with a victim some time before, viz., an old and very intimate friend. For he seems to have laid it down as a maxim—that the best person to murder was a friend; and, in default of a friend, which is an article one cannot always command, an acquaintance: because, in either case, on first approaching his subject, suspicion would be disarmed: whereas a stranger might take alarm, and find in the very countenance of his murderer elect a warning summons to place himself on guard. However, in the

present case, his destined victim was supposed to unite both characters : originally he had been a friend ; but subsequently, on good cause arising, he had become an enemy. Or more probably, as others said, the feelings had long since languished which gave life to either relation of friendship or of enmity. Marr was the name of that unhappy man, who (whether in the character of friend or enemy) had been selected for the subject of this present Saturday night's performance. And the story current at that time about the connection between Williams and Marr, having (whether true, or not true) never been contradicted upon authority, was, that they sailed in the same Indiaman to Calcutta ; that they had quarrelled when at sea ; but another version of the story said—no : they had quarrelled after returning from sea ; and the subject of their quarrel was Mrs. Marr, a very pretty young woman, for whose favour they had been rival candidates, and at one time with most bitter enmity towards each other. Some circumstances give a colour of probability to this story. Otherwise it has sometimes happened, on occasion of a murder not sufficiently accounted for, that, from pure goodness of heart intolerant of a mere sordid motive for a striking murder, some person has forged, and the public has accredited, a story representing the murderer as having moved under some loftier excitement : and in this case the public, too much shocked at the idea of Williams having on the single motive of gain consummated so complex a tragedy, welcomed the tale which represented him as governed by deadly malice, growing out of the more impassioned and noble rivalry for the favour of a woman. The case remains in some degree doubtful ; but, certainly, the probability is, that Mrs. Marr had been the true cause, the *causa teterrima*, of the feud between the men. Meantime, the minutes are numbered, the sands of the hour-glass are running out, that measure the duration of this feud upon earth. This night it shall cease. To-morrow is the day which in England they call Sunday, which in Scotland they call by the Judaic name of "Sabbath." To both nations, under different names, the day has the same functions ; to both it is a day of rest. For thee also, Marr, it shall be a day of rest ; so is it written ; thou, too, young Marr, shalt find rest—thou, and thy household, and the stranger that is within thy gates. But that rest must be in the world which lies beyond the grave. On this side the grave ye have all slept your final sleep.

The night was one of exceeding darkness ; and in this humble quarter of London, whatever the night happened to be, light or dark, quiet or stormy, all shops were kept open on Saturday nights until twelve o'clock, at the least, and many for half an hour longer. There was no rigorous and pedantic Jewish superstition about the exact limits of Sunday. At the very worst, the Sunday stretched over from one o'clock A.M. of one day, up to eight o'clock A.M. of the next, making a clear circuit of thirty-one hours. This, surely, was long enough. Marr, on this particular Saturday night, would be content if it were even shorter, provided it would come more quickly, for he has been toiling through sixteen hours behind his counter. Marr's position in life was this : he kept a little hosier's shop, and had invested in his stock and the fittings of his shop about £180. Like all men engaged in trade, he suffered some anxieties. He was a new beginner ; but, already, bad debts had alarmed him ; and bills were coming to maturity that were not likely to be met by commensurate sales. Yet, constitutionally, he was a sanguine hoper. At this time he was a stout, fresh-coloured young man of twenty-seven ; in some slight degree uneasy from his commercial prospects ; but still cheerful, and anticipating—(how vainly !)—that for this night, and the next night, at least, he will rest his wearied head and his cares upon the faithful bosom of his sweet lovely young wife. The household of Marr, consisting of five persons, is as follows : First, there is himself, who, if he should happen to be ruined, in a limited commercial sense, has energy enough to jump up again, like a pyramid of fire, and soar high above ruin many times repeated. Yes, poor Marr, so it might be, if thou wert left to thy native energies unmolested ; but even now there stands on the other side of the street one born of hell, who puts his peremptory negative on all these flattering prospects. Second in the list of this household, stands his pretty and amiable wife, who is happy after the fashion of youthful wives, for she is only twenty-two, and anxious (if at all) only on account of her darling infant. For, thirdly, there is in a cradle, not quite nine feet below the street, viz., in a warm, cosy kitchen, and rocked at intervals by the young mother, a baby eight months old. Nineteen months have Marr and herself been married ; and this is their first-born child. Grieve not for this child, that it must keep the deep rest of Sunday in some other world ; for wherefore should an orphan, steeped to the lips in

poverty, when once bereaved of father and mother, linger upon an alien and a murderous earth? Fourthly, there is a stoutish boy, an apprentice, say thirteen years old; a Devonshire boy, with handsome features, such as most Devonshire youths have; * satisfied with his place; not overworked; treated kindly, and aware that he was treated kindly, by his master and mistress. Fifthly, and lastly, bringing up the rear of this quiet household, is a servant girl, a grown-up young woman; and she, being particularly kind-hearted, occupied (as often happens in families of humble pretensions as to rank) a sort of sisterly place in her relation to her mistress. A great democratic change is at this very time (1854), and has been for twenty years, passing over British society. Multitudes of persons are becoming ashamed of saying, "my master," or "my mistress": the term now in the slow process of superseding it is, "my employer." Now, in the United States, such an expression of democratic hauteur, though disagreeable as a needless proclamation of independence which nobody is disputing, leaves, however, no lasting bad effect. For the domestic "helps" are pretty generally in a state of transition so sure and so rapid to the headship of domestic establishments belonging to themselves, that in effect they are but ignoring, for the present moment, a relation which would at any rate dissolve itself in a year or two. But in England, where no such resources exist of everlasting surplus lands, the tendency of the change is painful. It carries with it a sullen and a coarse expression of immunity from a yoke which was in any case a light one, and often a benign one. In some other place, I will illustrate my meaning. Here, apparently, in Mrs. Marr's service, the principle concerned illustrated itself practically. Mary, the female servant, felt a sincere and unaffected respect for a mistress whom she saw so steadily occupied with her domestic duties, and who, though so young, and invested with some slight authority, never exerted it capriciously, or even showed it at all conspicuously. According to the testimony of all the neighbours, she treated her mistress with a shade of unobtrusive respect on the one hand, and yet was eager to relieve her, whenever that was

* An artist told me in this year, 1812, that having accidentally seen a native Devonshire regiment (either volunteers or militia), nine hundred strong, marching past a station at which he had posted himself, he did not observe a dozen men that would not have been described in common parlance as "good-looking."

possible, from the weight of her maternal duties, with the cheerful voluntary service of a sister.

To this young woman it was, that, suddenly, within three or four minutes of midnight, Marr called aloud from the head of the stairs—directing her to go out and purchase some oysters for the family supper. Upon what slender accidents hang oftentimes solemn life-long results! Marr occupied in the concerns of his shop, Mrs. Marr occupied with some little ailment and restlessness of her baby, had both forgotten the affair of supper; the time was now narrowing every moment, as regarded any variety of choice; and oysters were perhaps ordered as the likeliest article to be had at all, after twelve o'clock should have struck. And yet, upon this trivial circumstance depended Mary's life. Had she been sent abroad for supper at the ordinary time of ten or eleven o'clock, it is almost certain that she, the solitary member of the household who escaped from the exterminating tragedy, would *not* have escaped; too surely she would have shared the general fate. It had now become necessary to be quick. Hastily, therefore, receiving money from Marr, with a basket in her hand, but unbonneted, Mary tripped out of the shop. It became afterwards, on recollection, a heart-chilling remembrance to herself—that, precisely as she emerged from the shop-door, she noticed, on the opposite side of the street, by the light of the lamps, a man's figure; stationary at the instant, but in the next instant slowly moving. This was Williams; as a little incident, either just before or just after (at present it is impossible to say which), sufficiently proved. Now, when one considers the inevitable hurry and trepidation of Mary under the circumstances stated, time barely sufficing for any chance of executing her errand, it becomes evident that she must have connected some deep feeling of mysterious uneasiness with the movements of this unknown man; else, assuredly, she would not have found her attention disposable for such a case. Thus far, she herself threw some little light upon what it might be that, semi-consciously, was then passing through her mind; she said, that, notwithstanding the darkness, which would not permit her to trace the man's features, or to ascertain the exact direction of his eyes, it yet struck her, that from his carriage, when in motion, and from the apparent inclination of his person, he must be looking at No. 29. The little incident which I have alluded to as confirming Mary's belief was, that, at some period not very far from midnight,

the watchman had specially noticed this stranger ; he had observed him continually peeping into the window of Marr's shop ; and had thought this act, connected with the man's appearance, so suspicious, that he stepped into Marr's shop, and communicated what he had seen. This fact he afterwards stated before the magistrates ; and he added, that subsequently, viz., a few minutes after twelve (eight or ten minutes, probably, after the departure of Mary), he (the watchman), when re-entering upon his ordinary half-hourly beat, was requested by Marr to assist him in closing the shutters. Here they had a final communication with each other ; and the watchman mentioned to Marr that the mysterious stranger had now apparently taken himself off ; for that he had not been visible since the first communication made to Marr by the watchman. There is little doubt that Williams had observed the watchman's visit to Marr, and had thus had his attention seasonably drawn to the indiscretion of his own demeanour ; so that the warning, given unavailingly to Marr, had been turned to account by Williams. There can be still less doubt, that the bloodhound had commenced his work within one minute of the watchman's assisting Marr to put up his shutters. And on the following consideration :— that which prevented Williams from commencing even earlier, was the exposure of the shop's whole interior to the gaze of street passengers. It was indispensable that the shutters should be accurately closed before Williams could safely get to work. But, as soon as ever this preliminary precaution had been completed, once having secured that concealment from the public eye, it then became of still greater importance not to lose a moment by delay, than previously it had been not to hazard anything by precipitance. For all depended upon going in before Marr should have locked the door. On any other mode of effecting an entrance (as, for instance, by waiting for the return of Mary, and making his entrance simultaneously with her), it will be seen that Williams must have forfeited that particular advantage which mute facts, when read into their true construction, will soon show the reader that he must have employed. Williams waited, of necessity, for the sound of the watchman's retreating steps ; waited, perhaps, for thirty seconds ; but when that danger was past, the next danger was, lest Marr should lock the door ; one turn of the key, and the murderer would have been locked out. In, therefore, he bolted, and by a dexterous movement

of his left hand, no doubt, turned the key, without letting Marr perceive this fatal stratagem. It is really wonderful and most interesting to pursue the successive steps of this monster, and to notice the absolute certainty with which the silent hieroglyphics of the case betray to us the whole process and movements of the bloody drama, not less surely and fully than if we had been ourselves hidden in Marr's shop, or had looked down from the heavens of mercy upon this hell-kite, that knew not what mercy meant. That he had concealed from Marr his trick, secret and rapid, upon the lock, is evident; because else, Marr would instantly have taken the alarm, especially after what the watchman had communicated. But it will soon be seen that Marr had *not* been alarmed. In reality, towards the full success of Williams, it was important, in the last degree, to intercept and forestall any yell or shout of agony from Marr. Such an outcry, and in a situation so slenderly fenced off from the street, viz., by walls the very thinnest, makes itself heard outside pretty nearly as well as if it were uttered in the street. Such an outcry it was indispensable to stifle. It *was* stifled; and the reader will soon understand *how*. Meantime, at this point, let us leave the murderer alone with his victims. For fifty minutes let him work his pleasure. The front-door, as we know, is now fastened against all help. Help there is none. Let us, therefore, in vision, attach ourselves to Mary; and, when all is over, let us come back with *her*, again raise the curtain, and read the dreadful record of all that has passed in her absence.

The poor girl, uneasy in her mind to an extent that she could but half understand, roamed up and down in search of an oyster shop; and finding none that was still open, within any circuit that her ordinary experience had made her acquainted with, she fancied it best to try the chances of some remoter district. Lights she saw gleaming or twinkling at a distance, that still tempted her onwards; and thus, amongst unknown streets poorly lighted,* and on a night of peculiar darkness, and in a region of London where ferocious tumults were continually turning her out of what seemed to be the direct course, naturally she got

* I do not remember, chronologically, the history of gas-lighting. But in London, long after Mr. Winsor had shown the value of gas-lighting, and its applicability to street purposes, various districts were prevented, for many years, from resorting to the new system, in consequence of old contracts with oil dealers, subsisting through long terms of years.

bewildered. The purpose with which she started, had by this time become hopeless. Nothing remained for her now but to retrace her steps. But this was difficult ; for she was afraid to ask directions from chance passengers, whose appearance the darkness prevented her from reconnoitring. At length by his lantern she recognised a watchman ; through him she was guided into the right road ; and in ten minutes more, she found herself back at the door of No. 29, in Ratcliffe Highway. But by this time she felt satisfied that she must have been absent for fifty or sixty minutes ; indeed, she had heard, at a distance, the cry of *past one o'clock*, which, commencing a few seconds after one, lasted intermittingly for ten or thirteen minutes.

In the tumult of agonising thoughts that very soon surprised her, naturally it became hard for her to recall distinctly the whole succession of doubts, and jealousies, and shadowy misgivings that soon opened upon her. But, so far as could be collected, she had not in the first moment of reaching home noticed anything decisively alarming. In very many cities bells are the main instruments for communicating between the street and the interior of houses : but in London knockers prevail. At Marr's there was both a knocker and a bell. Mary rang, and at the same time very gently knocked. She had no fear of disturbing her master or mistress ; *them* she made sure of finding still up. Her anxiety was for the baby, who being disturbed might again rob her mistress of a night's rest. And she well knew that, with three people all anxiously awaiting her return, and by this time, perhaps, seriously uneasy at her delay, the least audible whisper from herself would in a moment bring one of them to the door. Yet how is this ? To her astonishment, but with the astonishment came creeping over her an icy horror, no stir nor murmur was heard ascending from the kitchen. At this moment came back upon her, with shuddering anguish, the indistinct image of the stranger in the loose dark coat, whom she had seen stealing along under the shadowy lamp-light, and too certainly watching her master's motions : keenly she now reproached herself that, under whatever stress of hurry, she had not acquainted Mr. Marr with the suspicious appearances. Poor girl ! she did not then know that, if this communication could have availed to put Marr upon his guard, it had reached him from another quarter ; so that her own omission, which had in reality arisen under her hurry to execute her master's commission, could not

be charged with any bad consequences. But all such reflections this way or that were swallowed up at this point in overmastering panic. That her double summons *could* have been unnoticed—this solitary fact in one moment made a revelation of horror. One person might have fallen asleep, but two—but three—*that* was a mere impossibility. And even supposing all three together with the baby locked in sleep, still how unaccountable was this utter—utter silence! Most naturally at this moment something like hysterical horror overshadowed the poor girl, and now at last she rang the bell with the violence that belongs to sickening terror. This done, she paused: self-command enough she still retained, though fast and fast it was slipping away from her, to bethink herself—that, if any overwhelming accident *had* compelled both Marr and his apprentice-boy to leave the house in order to summon surgical aid from opposite quarters—a thing barely supposable—still, even in that case Mrs. Marr and her infant would be left; and some murmuring reply, under any extremity, would be elicited from the poor mother. To pause, therefore, to impose stern silence upon herself, so as to leave room for the possible answer to this final appeal, became a duty of spasmodic effort. Listen, therefore, poor trembling heart; listen, and for twenty seconds be still as death. Still as death she was: and during that dreadful stillness, when she hushed her breath that she might listen, occurred an incident of killing fear, that to her dying day would never cease to renew its echoes in her ear. She, Mary, the poor trembling girl, checking and overruling herself by a final effort, that she might leave full opening for her dear young mistress's answer to her own frantic appeal, heard at last and most distinctly a sound within the house. Yes, now beyond a doubt there is coming an answer to her summons. What was it? On the stairs, not the stairs that led downwards to the kitchen, but the stairs that led upwards to the single storey of bed-chambers above, was heard a creaking sound. Next was heard most distinctly a footfall: one, two, three, four, five stairs were slowly and distinctly descended. Then the dreadful footsteps were heard advancing along the little narrow passage to the door. The steps—oh heavens! *whose* steps?—have paused at the door. The very breathing can be heard of that dreadful being, who has silenced all breathing except his own in the house. There is but a door between him and Mary. What is he doing on the

other side of the door? A cautious step, a stealthy step it was that came down the stairs, then paced along the little narrow passage—narrow as a coffin—till at last the step pauses at the door. How hard the fellow breathes! He, the solitary murderer, is on one side the door; Mary is on the other side. Now, suppose that he should suddenly open the door, and that incautiously in the dark Mary should rush in, and find herself in the arms of the murderer. Thus far the case is a possible one—that to a certainty, had this little trick been tried immediately upon Mary's return, it would have succeeded; had the door been opened suddenly upon her first tingle-tingle, headlong she would have tumbled in, and perished. But now Mary is upon her guard. The unknown murderer and she have both their lips upon the door, listening, breathing hard; but luckily they are on different sides of the door; and upon the least indication of unlocking or unlatching, she would have recoiled into the asylum of general darkness.

What was the murderer's meaning in coming along the passage to the front door? The meaning was this: separately, as an individual, Mary was worth nothing at all to him. But, considered as a member of a household, she had this value, viz., that she, if caught and murdered, perfected and rounded the desolation of the house. The case being reported, as reported it would be all over Christendom, led the imagination captive. The whole convey of victims was thus netted; the household ruin was thus full and orbicular; and in that proportion the tendency of men and women, flutter as they might, would be helplessly and hopelessly to sink into the all-conquering hands of the mighty murderer. He had but to say—my testimonials are dated from No. 29 Ratcliffe Highway, and the poor vanquished imagination sank powerless before the fascinating rattlesnake eye of the murderer. There is not a doubt that the motive of the murderer for standing on the inner side of Marr's front-door, whilst Mary stood on the outside, was—a hope that, if he quietly opened the door, whisperingly counterfeiting Marr's voice, and saying, What made you stay so long? possibly she might have been inveigled. He was wrong; the time was past for that; Mary was now maniacally awake; she began now to ring the bell and to ply the knocker with unintermitting violence. And the natural consequence was, that the next door neighbour, who had recently gone to bed and instantly fallen asleep, was roused; and by the incessant violence of the ringing

and the knocking, which now obeyed a delirious and uncontrollable impulse in Mary, he became sensible that some very dreadful event must be at the root of so clamorous an uproar. To rise, to throw up the sash, to demand angrily the cause of this unseasonable tumult, was the work of a moment. The poor girl remained sufficiently mistress of herself rapidly to explain the circumstance of her own absence for an hour; her belief that Mr. and Mrs. Marr's family had all been murdered in the interval; and that at this very moment the murderer was in the house.

The person to whom she addressed this statement was a pawnbroker; and a thoroughly brave man he must have been; for it was a perilous undertaking, merely as a trial of physical strength, singly to face a mysterious assassin, who had apparently signalised his prowess by a triumph so comprehensive. But, again, for the imagination it required an effort of self-conquest to rush headlong into the presence of one invested with a cloud of mystery, whose nation, age, motives, were all alike unknown. Rarely on any field of battle has a soldier been called upon to face so complex a danger. For if the entire family of his neighbour Marr had been exterminated, were this indeed true, such a scale of bloodshed would seem to argue that there must have been two persons as the perpetrators; or, if one singly had accomplished such a ruin, in that case how colossal must have been his audacity! probably, also, his skill and animal power! Moreover, the unknown enemy (whether single or double) would, doubtless, be elaborately armed. Yet, under all these disadvantages, did this fearless man rush at once to the field of butchery in his neighbour's house. Waiting only to draw on his trousers, and to arm himself with the kitchen poker, he went down into his own little back-yard. On this mode of approach, he would have a chance of intercepting the murderer; whereas from the front there would be no such chance; and there would also be considerable delay in the process of breaking open the door. A brick wall, 9 or 10 feet high, divided his own back premises from those of Marr. Over this he vaulted; and at the moment when he was recalling himself to the necessity of going back for a candle, he suddenly perceived a feeble ray of light already glimmering on some part of Marr's premises. Marr's back-door stood wide open. Probably the murderer had passed through it one half minute before. Rapidly the brave man passed onwards to the shop, and there beheld the carnage of the night

stretched out on the floor, and the narrow premises so floated with gore, that it was hardly possible to escape the pollution of blood in picking out a path to the front-door. In the lock of the door still remained the key which had given to the unknown murderer so fatal an advantage over his victims. By this time the heart-shaking news involved in the outcries of Mary (to whom it occurred that by possibility some one out of so many victims might still be within the reach of medical aid, but that all would depend upon speed) had availed, even at that late hour, to gather a small mob about the house. The pawnbroker threw open the door. One or two watchmen headed the crowd; but the soul-harrowing spectacle checked them, and impressed sudden silence upon their voices, previously so loud. The tragic drama read aloud its own history, and the succession of its several steps—few and summary. The murderer was as yet altogether unknown; not even suspected. But there were reasons for thinking that he must have been a person familiarly known to Marr. He had entered the shop by opening the door after it had been closed by Marr. But it was justly argued—that, after the caution conveyed to Marr by the watchman, the appearance of any stranger in the shop at that hour, and in so dangerous a neighbourhood, and entering by so irregular and suspicious a course (*i.e.*, walking in after the door had been closed, and after the closing of the shutters had cut off all open communication with the street), would naturally have roused Marr to an attitude of vigilance and self-defence. Any indication, therefore, that Marr had *not* been so roused, would argue to a certainty that *something* had occurred to neutralise this alarm, and fatally to disarm the prudent jealousies of Marr. But this “something” could only have lain in one simple fact, *viz.*, that the person of the murderer was familiarly known to Marr as that of an ordinary and unsuspected acquaintance. This being presupposed as the key to all the rest, the whole course and evolution of the subsequent drama becomes clear as daylight. The murderer, it is evident, had opened gently, and again closed behind him with equal gentleness, the street-door. He had then advanced to the little counter, all the while exchanging the ordinary salutation of an old acquaintance with the unsuspecting Marr. Having reached the counter, he would then ask Marr for a pair of unbleached cotton socks. In a shop so small as Marr’s, there could be no great latitude of choice for disposing of the different commodities. The

arrangement of these had no doubt become familiar to the murderer ; and he had already ascertained that, in order to reach down the particular parcel wanted at present, Marr would find it requisite to face round to the rear, and, at the same moment, to raise his eyes and his hands to a level eighteen inches above his own head. This movement placed him in the most disadvantageous possible position with regard to the murderer, who now, at the instant when Marr's hands, and eyes were embarrassed, and the back of his head fully exposed, suddenly from below his large surtout, had unslung a heavy ship-carpenter's mallet, and, with one solitary blow, had so thoroughly stunned his victim, as to leave him incapable of resistance. The whole position of Marr told its own tale. He had collapsed naturally behind the counter, with his hands so occupied as to confirm the whole outline of the affair as I have here suggested it. Probable enough it is that the very first blow, the first indication of treachery that reached Marr, would also be the last blow as regarded the abolition of consciousness. The murderer's plan and *rationale* of murder started systematically from this infliction of apoplexy, or at least of a stunning sufficient to insure a long loss of consciousness. This opening step placed the murderer at his ease. But still, as returning sense might constantly have led to the fullest exposures, it was his settled practice, by way of consummation, to cut the throat. To one invariable type all the murders on this occasion conformed : the skull was first shattered ; this step secured the murderer from instant retaliation ; and then, by way of locking up all into eternal silence, uniformly the throat was cut. The rest of the circumstances, as self-revealed, were these. The fall of Marr might, probably enough, cause a dull confused sound of a scuffle, and the more so, as it could not now be confounded with any street uproar—the shop-door being shut. It is more probable, however, that the signal for the alarm passing down to the kitchen, would arise when the murderer proceeded to cut Marr's throat. The very confined situation behind the counter would render it impossible, under the critical hurry of the case, to expose the throat broadly ; the horrid scene would proceed by partial and interrupted cuts ; deep groans would arise ; and then would come the rush up-stairs. Against this, as the only dangerous stage in the transaction, the murderer would have specially prepared. Mrs. Marr and the apprentice-boy, both young and active, would

make, of course, for the street-door; had Mary been at home, and three persons at once had combined to distract the purposes of the murderer, it is barely possible that one of them would have succeeded in reaching the street. But the dreadful swing of the heavy mallet intercepted both the boy and his mistress before they could reach the door. Each of them lay stretched out on the centre of the shop floor; and the very moment that this disabling was accomplished, the accursed hound was down upon their throats with his razor. The fact is, that, in the mere blindness of pity for poor Marr, on hearing his groans, Mrs. Marr had lost sight of her obvious policy; she and the boy ought to have made for the back door; the alarm would thus have been given in the open air; which, of itself, was a great point; and several means of distracting the murderer's attention offered upon that course, which the extreme limitation of the shop denied to them upon the other.

Vain would be all attempts to convey the horror which thrilled the gathering spectators of this piteous tragedy. It was known to the crowd that one person had, by some accident, escaped the general massacre; but she was now speechless, and probably delirious; so that, in compassion for her pitiable situation, one female neighbour had carried her away, and put her to bed. Hence it had happened, for a longer space of time than could else have been possible, that no person present was sufficiently acquainted with the Marrs to be aware of the little infant; for the bold pawnbroker had gone off to make a communication to the coroner; and another neighbour, to lodge some evidence which he thought urgent at a neighbouring police-office. Suddenly some person appeared amongst the crowd who was aware that the murdered parents had a young infant; this would be found either below-stairs, or in one of the bedrooms above. Immediately a stream of people poured down into the kitchen, where at once they saw the cradle—but with the bedclothes in a state of indescribable confusion. On disentangling these, pools of blood became visible; and the next ominous sign was, that the hood of the cradle had been smashed to pieces. It became evident that the wretch had found himself doubly embarrassed—first, by the arched hood at the head of the cradle, which accordingly he had beat into a ruin with his mallet, and secondly, by the gathering of the blankets and pillows about the baby's head. The free play of his blows had thus been baffled. And he had therefore finished the scene by

applying his razor to the throat of the little innocent ; after which, with no apparent purpose, as though he had become confused by the spectacle of his own atrocities, he had busied himself in piling the clothes elaborately over the child's corpse. The incident undeniably gave the character of a vindictive proceeding to the whole affair, and so far confirmed the current rumour that the quarrel between Williams and Marr had originated in rivalry. One writer, indeed, alleged that the murderer might have found it necessary for his own safety to extinguish the crying of the child ; but it was justly replied, that a child only eight months old could not have cried under any sense of the tragedy proceeding, but simply in its ordinary way for the absence of its mother ; and such a cry, even if audible at all out of the house, must have been precisely what the neighbours were hearing constantly, so that it could have drawn no special attention, nor suggested any reasonable alarm to the murderer. No one incident, indeed, throughout the whole tissue of atrocities, so much envenomed the popular fury against the unknown ruffian, as this useless butchery of the infant.

Naturally, on the Sunday morning that dawned four or five hours later, the case was too full of horror not to diffuse itself in all directions ; but I have no reason to think that it crept into any one of the numerous Sunday papers. In the regular course, any ordinary occurrence, not occurring, or not transpiring until 15 minutes after 1 A.M. on a Sunday morning, would first reach the public ear through the Monday editions of the Sunday papers, and the regular morning papers of the Monday. But, if such were the course pursued on this occasion, never can there have been a more signal oversight. For it is certain, that to have met the public demand for details on the Sunday, which might so easily have been done by cancelling a couple of dull columns, and substituting a circumstantial narrative, for which the pawnbroker and the watchman could have furnished the materials, would have made a small fortune. By proper handbills dispersed through all quarters of the infinite metropolis, 250,000 extra copies might have been sold ; that is, by any journal that should have collected *exclusive* materials, meeting the public excitement, everywhere stirred to the centre by flying rumours, and everywhere burning for ampler information. On the Sunday se'ennight (Sunday the *octave* from the event), took place the funeral of the Marrs ; in the first coffin was placed

Marr ; in the second Mrs. Marr, and the baby in her arms ; in the third the apprentice boy. They were buried side by side ; and 30,000 labouring people followed the funeral procession, with horror and grief written in their countenances.

As yet no whisper was astir that indicated, even conjecturally, the hideous author of these ruins—this patron of gravediggers. Had as much been known on this Sunday of the funeral concerning that person as became known universally six days later, the people would have gone right from the churchyard to the murderer's lodgings, and (brooking no delay) would have torn him limb from limb. As yet, however, in mere default of any object on whom reasonable suspicion could settle, the public wrath was compelled to suspend itself. Else, far indeed from showing any tendency to subside, the public emotion strengthened every day conspicuously, as the reverberation of the shock began to travel back from the provinces to the capital. On every great road in the kingdom, continual arrests were made of vagrants and "trampers," who could give no satisfactory account of themselves, or whose appearance in any respect answered to the imperfect description of Williams furnished by the watchman.

With this mighty tide of pity and indignation pointing backwards to the dreadful past, there mingled also in the thoughts of reflecting persons an under-current of fearful expectation for the immediate future. "The earthquake," to quote a fragment from a striking passage in Wordsworth—

"The earthquake is not satisfied at once."

All perils, specially malignant, are recurrent. A murderer, who is such by passion and by a wolfish craving for bloodshed as a mode of unnatural luxury, cannot relapse into *inertia*. Such a man, even more than the Alpine chamois hunter, comes to crave the dangers and the hairbreadth escapes of his trade, as a condiment for seasoning the insipid monotonies of daily life. But, apart from the hellish instincts that might too surely be relied on for renewed atrocities, it was clear that the murderer of the Marrs, wheresoever lurking, must be a needy man ; and a needy man of that class least likely to seek or to find resources in honourable modes of industry ; for which, equally by haughty disgust and by disuse of the appropriate habits, men of violence are specially disqualified. Were

it, therefore, merely for a livelihood, the murderer, whom all hearts were yearning to decipher, might be expected to make his resurrection on some stage of horror, after a reasonable interval. Even in the Marr murder, granting that it had been governed chiefly by cruel and vindictive impulses, it was still clear that the desire of booty had co-operated with such feelings. Equally clear it was that this desire must have been disappointed: excepting the trivial sum reserved by Marr for the week's expenditure, the murderer found, doubtless, little or nothing that he could turn to account. Two guineas, perhaps, would be the outside of what he had obtained in the way of booty. A week or so would see the end of that. The conviction, therefore, of all people was, that in a month or two, when the fever of excitement might a little have cooled down, or have been superseded by other topics of fresher interest, so that the new-born vigilance of household life would have had time to relax, some new murder, equally appalling, might be counted upon.

Such was the public expectation. Let the reader then figure to himself the pure frenzy of horror when in this hush of expectation, looking, indeed, and waiting for the unknown arm to strike once more, but not believing that any audacity could be equal to such an attempt as yet, whilst all eyes were watching, suddenly, on the twelfth night from the Marr murder, a second case of the same mysterious nature, a murder on the same exterminating plan, was perpetrated in the very same neighbourhood. It was on the Thursday next but one succeeding to the Marr murder that this second atrocity took place; and many people thought at the time, that in its dramatic features of thrilling interest this second case even went beyond the first. The family which suffered in this instance was that of a Mr. Williamson; and the house was situated, if not absolutely in Ratcliffe Highway, at any rate immediately round the corner of some secondary street, running at right angles to this public thoroughfare. Mr. Williamson was a well-known and respectable man, long settled in that district; he was supposed to be rich; and more with a view to the employment furnished by such a calling, than with much anxiety for further accumulations, he kept a sort of tavern; which, in this respect, might be considered on an old patriarchal footing—that, although people of considerable property resorted to the house in the evenings, no kind of anxious separation was maintained between them and the other visitors from the class of

artisans or common labourers. Anybody who conducted himself with propriety was free to take a seat, and call for any liquor that he might prefer. And thus the society was pretty miscellaneous ; in part stationary, but in some proportion fluctuating. The household consisted of the following five persons :—1. Mr. Williamson, its head, who was an old man above seventy, and was well fitted for his situation, being civil, and not at all morose, but, at the same time, firm in maintaining order ; 2. Mrs. Williamson, his wife, about ten years younger than himself ; 3. a little grand-daughter, about nine years old ; 4. a housemaid, who was nearly forty years old ; 5. a young journeyman, aged about twenty-six, belonging to some manufacturing establishment (of what class I have forgotten) ; neither do I remember of what nation he was. It was the established rule at Mr. Williamson's, that, exactly as the clock struck eleven, all the company, without favour or exception, moved off. That was one of the customs by which, in so stormy a district, Mr. Williamson had found it possible to keep his house free from brawls. On the present Thursday night everything had gone on as usual, except for one slight shadow of suspicion, which had caught the attention of more persons than one. Perhaps at a less agitating time it would hardly have been noticed ; but now, when the first question and the last in all social meetings turned upon the Marrs, and their unknown murderer, it was a circumstance naturally fitted to cause some uneasiness, that a stranger, of sinister appearance, in a wide surtout, had flitted in and out of the room at intervals during the evening ; had sometimes retired from the light into obscure corners ; and, by more than one person, had been observed stealing into the private passages of the house. It was presumed in general that the man must be known to Williamson. And, in some slight degree, as an occasional customer of the house, it is not impossible that he *was*. But afterwards, this repulsive stranger, with his cadaverous ghastliness, extraordinary hair, and glazed eyes, showing himself intermittingly through the hours from 8 to 11 P.M., revolved upon the memory of all who had steadily observed him with something of the same freezing effect as belongs to the two assassins in "Macbeth," who present themselves reeking from the murder of Banquo, and gleaming dimly, with dreadful faces, from the misty background, athwart the pomps of the regal banquet.

Meantime the clock struck eleven ; the company broke

up ; the door of entrance was nearly closed ; and at this moment of general dispersion the situation of the five inmates left upon the premises was precisely this : the three elders, viz., Williamson, his wife, and his female servant, were all occupied on the ground floor—Williamson himself was drawing ale, porter, etc., for those neighbours in whose favour the house-door had been left ajar, until the hour of twelve should strike ; Mrs. Williamson and her servant were moving to and fro between the back kitchen and the little parlour ; the little grand-daughter, whose sleeping-room was on the *first* floor (which term in London means always the floor raised by one flight of stairs above the level of the street), had been fast asleep since nine o'clock ; lastly, the journeyman artisan had retired to rest for some time. He was a regular lodger in the house ; and his bedroom was on the second floor. For some time he had been undressed, and had lain down in bed. Being, as a working man, bound to habits of early rising, he was naturally anxious to fall asleep as soon as possible. But, on this particular night, his uneasiness, arising from the recent murders at No. 29, rose to a paroxysm of nervous excitement which kept him awake. It is possible, that from somebody he had heard of the suspicious-looking stranger, or might even personally have observed him slinking about. But, were it otherwise, he was aware of several circumstances dangerously affecting this house ; for instance, the ruffianism of this whole neighbourhood, and the disagreeable fact that the Marrs had lived within a few doors of this very house, which again argued that the murderer also lived at no great distance. These were matters of *general* alarm. But there were others peculiar to this house ; in particular, the notoriety of Williamson's opulence ; the belief, whether well or ill-founded, that he accumulated, in desks and drawers, the money continually flowing into his hands ; and lastly, the danger so ostentatiously courted by that habit of leaving the house-door ajar through one entire hour—and that hour loaded with extra danger, by the well-advertised assurance that no collision need be feared with chance convivial visitors, since all such people were banished at eleven. A regulation, which had hitherto operated beneficially for the character and comfort of the house, now, on the contrary, under altered circumstances, became a positive proclamation of exposure and defencelessness, through one entire period of an hour. Williamson himself, it was said generally,

being a large unwieldy man, past seventy, and signally inactive, ought, in prudence, to make the locking of his door coincident with the dismissal of his evening party.

Upon these and other grounds of alarm (particularly this, that Mrs. Williamson was reported to possess a considerable quantity of plate), the journeyman was musing painfully, and the time might be within twenty-eight or twenty-five minutes of twelve, when all at once, with a crash, proclaiming some hand of hideous violence, the house door was suddenly shut and locked. Here, then, beyond all doubt, was the diabolic man, clothed in mystery, from No. 29 Ratcliffe Highway. Yes, that dreadful being, who for twelve days had employed all thoughts and all tongues, was now, too certainly, in this defenceless house, and would, in a few minutes, be face to face with every one of its inmates. A question still lingered in the public mind—whether at Marr's there might not have been *two* men at work. If so, there would be two at present; and one of the two would be immediately disposable for the up-stairs work; since no danger could obviously be more immediately fatal to such an attack than any alarm given from an upper window to the passengers in the street. Through one half-minute the poor panic-stricken man sat up motionless in bed. But then he rose, his first movement being towards the door of his room. Not for any purpose of securing it against intrusion—too well he knew that there was no fastening of any sort—neither lock, nor bolt; nor was there any such moveable furniture in the room as might have availed to barricade the door, even if time could be counted on for such an attempt. It was no effect of prudence, merely the fascination of killing fear it was, that drove him to open the door. One step brought him to the head of the stairs; he lowered his head over the balustrade in order to listen; and at that moment ascended, from the little parlour, this agonising cry from the woman-servant, “Lord Jesus Christ! we shall all be murdered!” What a Medusa's head must have lurked in those dreadful bloodless features, and those glazed rigid eyes, that seemed rightfully belonging to a corpse, when one glance at them sufficed to proclaim a death-warrant.

Three separate death-struggles were by this time over; and the poor petrified journeyman, quite unconscious of what he was doing, in blind, passive, self-surrender to panic, absolutely descended both flights of stairs. Infinite terror inspired him with the same impulse as might have been

inspired by headlong courage. In his shirt, and upon old decaying stairs, that at times creaked under his feet, he continued to descend, until he had reached the lowest step but four. The situation was tremendous beyond any that is on record. A sneeze, a cough, almost a breathing, and the young man would be a corpse, without a chance or a struggle for his life. The murderer was at that time in the little parlour—the door of which parlour faced you in descending the stairs; and this door stood ajar; indeed, much more considerably open than what is understood by the term “ajar.” Of that quadrant, or 90 degrees, which the door would describe in swinging so far open as to stand at right angles to the lobby, or to itself, in a closed position, 55 degrees at the least were exposed. Consequently, two out of three corpses were exposed to the young man’s gaze. Where was the third? And the murderer—where was he? As to the murderer, he was walking rapidly backwards and forwards in the parlour, audible but not visible at first, being engaged with something or other in that part of the room which the door still concealed. What the something might be, the sound soon explained; he was applying keys tentatively to a cupboard, a closet, and a scrutoire, in the hidden part of the room. Very soon, however, he came into view; but, fortunately for the young man, at this critical moment, the murderer’s purpose too entirely absorbed him to allow of his throwing a glance to the staircase, on which else the white figure of the journeyman, standing in motionless horror, would have been detected in one instant, and seasoned for the grave in the second. As to the third corpse, the missing corpse, viz., Mr. Williamson’s, *that is* in the cellar; and how its local position can be accounted for, remains as a separate question much discussed at the time, but never satisfactorily cleared up. Meantime, that Williamson was dead, became evident to the young man; since else he would have been heard stirring or groaning. Three friends, therefore, out of four, whom the young man had parted with forty minutes ago, were now extinguished; remained, therefore, 40 per cent. (a large per centage for Williams to leave); remained, in fact, himself and his pretty young friend, the little granddaughter, whose childish innocence was still slumbering without fear for herself, or grief for her aged grand-parents. If *they* are gone for ever, happily one friend (for such he will prove himself, indeed, if from such a danger he can save this child) is pretty near to her. But alas! he is still

nearer to a murderer. At this moment he is unnerved for any exertion whatever ; he has changed into a pillar of ice ; for the objects before him, separated by just thirteen feet, are these :—The housemaid had been caught by the murderer on her knees ; she was kneeling before the fire-grate, which she had been polishing with black lead. That part of her task was finished ; and she had passed on to another task, viz., the filling of the grate with wood and coals, not for kindling at this moment, but so as to have it ready for kindling on the next day. The appearances all showed that she must have been engaged in this labour at the very moment when the murderer entered ; and perhaps the succession of the incidents arranged itself as follows :—From the awful ejaculation and loud outcry to Christ, as overheard by the journeyman, it was clear that then first she had been alarmed ; yet this was at least one and a-half or even two minutes after the door-slamming. Consequently the alarm which had so fearfully and seasonably alarmed the young man, must, in some unaccountable way, have been misinterpreted by the two women. It was said, at the time, that Mrs. Williamson laboured under some dulness of hearing ; and it was conjectured that the servant, having her ears filled with the noise of her own scrubbing, and her head half under the grate, might have confounded it with the street noises, or else might have imputed this violent closure to some mischievous boys. But, howsoever explained, the fact was evident, that, until the words of appeal to Christ, the servant had noticed nothing suspicious, nothing which interrupted her labours. If so, it followed that neither had Mrs. Williamson noticed anything ; for, in that case, she would have communicated her own alarm to the servant, since both were in the same small room. Apparently the course of things after the murderer had entered the room was this :—Mrs. Williamson had probably not seen him, from the accident of standing with her back to the door. Her, therefore, before he was himself observed at all, he had stunned and prostrated by a shattering blow on the back of her head ; this blow, inflicted by a crow-bar, had smashed in the hinder part of the skull. She fell ; and by the noise of her fall (for all was the work of a moment) had first roused the attention of the servant ; who then uttered the cry which had reached the young man ; but before she could repeat it, the murderer had descended with his uplifted instrument upon *her* head, crushing the skull inwards upon the brain.

Both the women were irrecoverably destroyed, so that further outrages were needless; and, moreover, the murderer was conscious of the imminent danger from delay; and yet, in spite of his hurry, so fully did he appreciate the fatal consequences to himself, if any of his victims should so far revive into consciousness as to make circumstantial depositions, that, by way of making this impossible, he had proceeded instantly to cut the throats of each. All this tallied with the appearances as now presenting themselves. Mrs. Williamson had fallen backwards with her head to the door; the servant, from her kneeling posture, had been incapable of rising, and had presented her head passively to blows; after which, the miscreant had but to bend her head backwards so as to expose her throat, and the murder was finished. It is remarkable that the young artisan, paralysed as he had been by fear, and evidently fascinated for a time so as to walk right towards the lion's mouth, yet found himself able to notice everything important. The reader must suppose him at this point watching the murderer whilst hanging over the body of Mrs. Williamson, and whilst renewing his search for certain important keys. Doubtless it was an anxious situation for the murderer; for, unless he speedily found the keys wanted, all this hideous tragedy would end in nothing but a prodigious increase of the public horror, in tenfold precautions therefore, and redoubled obstacles interposed between himself and his future game. Nay, there was even a nearer interest at stake; his own immediate safety might, by a probable accident, be compromised. Most of those who came to the house for liquor were giddy girls or children, who, on finding this house closed, would go off carelessly to some other; but, let any thoughtful woman or man come to the door now, a full quarter of an hour before the established time of closing, in that case suspicion would arise too powerful to be checked. There would be a sudden alarm given; after which, mere luck would decide the event. For it is a remarkable fact, and one that illustrates the singular inconsistency of this villain, who, being often so superfluously subtle, was in other directions so reckless and improvident, that at this very moment, standing amongst corpses that had deluged the little parlour with blood, Williams must have been in considerable doubt whether he had any sure means of egress. There were windows, he knew, to the back; but upon what ground they opened, he seems to have had no certain

information ; and in a neighbourhood so dangerous, the windows of the lower storey would not improbably be nailed down ; those in the upper might be free, but then came the necessity of a leap too formidable. From all this, however, the sole practical inference was to hurry forward with the trial of further keys, and to detect the hidden treasure. This it was, this intense absorption in one overmastering pursuit, that dulled the murderer's perceptions as to all around him ; otherwise, he must have heard the breathing of the young man, which to himself at times became fearfully audible. As the murderer stood once more over the body of Mrs. Williamson, and searched her pockets more narrowly, he pulled out various clusters of keys, one of which dropping, gave a harsh jingling sound upon the floor. At this time it was that the secret witness, from his secret stand, noticed the fact of Williams's surtout being lined with silk of the finest quality. One other fact he noticed, which eventually became more immediately important than many stronger circumstances of incrimination ; this was, that the shoes of the murderer, apparently new, and bought, probably, with poor Marr's money, creaked as he walked, harshly and frequently. With the new clusters of keys, the murderer walked off to the hidden section of the parlour. And here, at last, was suggested to the journeyman the sudden opening for an escape. Some minutes would be lost to a certainty in trying all these keys ; and subsequently in searching the drawers, supposing that the keys answered—or in violently forcing them, supposing that they did *not*. He might thus count upon a brief interval of leisure, whilst the rattling of the keys might obscure to the murderer the creaking of the stairs under the re-ascending journeyman. His plan was now formed : on regaining his bedroom, he placed the bed against the door by way of a transient retardation to the enemy, that might give him a short warning, and in the worst extremity, might give him a chance for life by means of a desperate leap. This change made as quietly as was possible, he tore the sheets, pillow-cases, and blankets into broad fibbons ; and after plaiting them into ropes, spliced the different lengths together. But at the very first he descries this ugly addition to his labours. Where shall he look for any staple, hook, or bar, or other fixture, from which his rope, when twisted, may safely depend ? Measured from the window-sill—*i.e.*, the lowest part of the window architrave—there count but twenty-two or twenty-three feet to the ground. Of this length ten or

twelve feet may be looked upon as cancelled, because to that extent he might drop without danger. So much being deducted, there would remain, say, a dozen feet of rope to prepare. But, unhappily, there is no stout iron fixture anywhere about his window. The nearest, indeed the sole fixture of that sort, is not near to the window at all ; it is a spike fixed (for no reason at all that is apparent) in the bed-tester ; now, the bed being shifted, the spike is shifted ; and its distance from the window, having always been four feet, is now seven. Seven entire feet, therefore, must be added to that which would have sufficed if measured from the window. But courage ! God, by the proverb of all nations in Christendom, helps those that help themselves. This our young man thankfully acknowledges ; he reads already, in the very fact of any spike at all being found where hitherto it has been useless, an earnest of providential aid. Were it only for himself that he worked, he could not feel himself meritoriously employed ; but this is not so ; in deep sincerity, he is now agitated for the poor child, whom he knows and loves ; every minute, he feels, brings ruin nearer to *her* ; and, as he passed her door, his first thought had been to take her out of bed in his arms, and to carry her where she might share his chances. But, on consideration, he felt that this sudden awaking of her, and the impossibility of even whispering any explanation, would cause her to cry audibly ; and the inevitable indiscretion of one would be fatal to the two. As the Alpine avalanches, when suspended above the traveller's head, oftentimes (we are told) come down through the stirring of the air by a simple whisper, precisely on such a tenure of a whisper was now suspended the murderous malice of the man below. No ; there is but one way to save the child ; towards *her* deliverance, the first step is through his own. And he has made an excellent beginning ; for the spike, which too fearfully he had expected to see torn away by any strain upon it from the half-carious wood, stands firmly when tried against the pressure of his own weight. He has rapidly fastened on to it three lengths of his new rope, measuring eleven feet. He plaits it roughly ; so that only three feet have been lost in the inter-twisting ; he has spliced on a second length equal to the first ; so that, already, sixteen feet are ready to throw out of the window ; and thus, let the worst come to the worst, it will not be absolute ruin to swarm down the rope so far as it will reach, and then to drop boldly. All this has been

accomplished in about six minutes ; and the hot contest between above and below is still steadily but fervently proceeding. Murderer is working hard in the parlour ; journeyman is working hard in the bedroom. Miscreant is getting on famously down-stairs ; one batch of bank-notes he has already bagged ; and is hard upon the scent of a second. He has also sprung a covey of golden coins. Sovereigns as yet were not ; but guineas at this period fetched thirty shillings a-piece ; and he has worked his way into a little quarry of these. Murderer is almost joyous ; and if any creature is still living in this house, as shrewdly he suspects, and very soon means to know, with that creature he would be happy, before cutting the creature's throat, to drink a glass of something. Instead of the glass, might he not make a present to the poor creature of its throat ? Oh no ! impossible ! Throats are a sort of thing that he never makes presents of ; business—business must be attended to. Really the two men, considered simply as men of business, are both meritorious. Like chorus and semi-chorus, strophe and antistrophe, they work each against the other. Pull journeyman, pull murderer ! Pull baker, pull devil ! As regards the journeyman, he is now safe. To his sixteen feet, of which seven are neutralised by the distance of the bed, he has at last added six feet more, which will be short of reaching the ground by perhaps ten feet—a trifle which man or boy may drop without injury. All is safe, therefore, for him : which is more than one can be sure of for miscreant in the parlour. Miscreant, however, takes it coolly enough : the reason being, that, with all his cleverness, for once in his life miscreant has been over-reached. The reader and I know, but miscreant does not in the least suspect, a little fact of some importance, viz., that just now through a space of full three minutes he has been overlooked and studied by one, who (though reading in a dreadful book, and suffering under mortal panic) took accurate notes of so much as his limited opportunities allowed him to see, and will assuredly report the creaking shoes and the silk-mounted surtout in quarters where such little facts will tell very little to his advantage. But, although it is true that Mr. Williams, unaware of the journeyman's having "assisted" at the examination of Mrs. Williamson's pockets, could not connect any anxiety with that person's subsequent proceedings, nor specially, therefore, with his having embarked in the rope-weaving line, assuredly he knew of reasons enough for not loitering.

And yet he *did* loiter. Reading his acts by the light of such mute traces as he left behind him, the police became aware that latterly he must have loitered. And the reason which governed him is striking; because at once it records—that murder was not pursued by him simply as a means to an end, but also as an end for itself. Mr. Williams had now been upon the premises for perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes; and in that space of time he had despatched, in a style satisfactory to himself, a considerable amount of business. He had done, in commercial language, “a good stroke of business.” Upon two floors, viz., the cellar-floor and the ground-floor, he has “accounted for” all the population. But there remained at least two floors more; and it now occurred to Mr. Williams that, although the landlord’s somewhat chilling manner had shut him out from any familiar knowledge of the household arrangements, too probably on one or other of those floors there must be some throats. As to plunder, he has already bagged the whole. And it was next to impossible that any arrear the most trivial should still remain for a gleaner. But the throats—the throats—there it was that arrears and gleanings might perhaps be counted on. And thus it appeared that, in his wolfish thirst for blood, Mr. Williams put to hazard the whole fruits of his night’s work, and his life into the bargain. At this moment, if the murderer knew all, could he see the open window above stairs ready for the descent of the journeyman, could he witness the life-and-death rapidity with which that journeyman is working, could he guess at the almighty uproar which within ninety seconds will be maddening the population of this populous district—no picture of a maniac in flight of panic or in pursuit of vengeance would adequately represent the agony of haste with which he would himself be hurrying to the street-door for final evasion. That mode of escape was still free. Even at this moment, there yet remained time sufficient for a successful flight, and, therefore, for the following revolution in the romance of his own abominable life. He had in his pockets above a hundred pounds of booty; means, therefore, for a full disguise. This very night, if he will shave off his yellow hair, and blacken his eyebrows, buying, when morning light returns, a dark-coloured wig, and clothes such as may co-operate in personating the character of a grave professional man, he may elude all suspicions of impertinent policemen—may sail by any one of a hundred vessels bound for any port along the huge line of sea-board

(stretching through 2400 miles) of the American United States; may enjoy fifty years for leisurely repentance; and may even die in the odour of sanctity. On the other hand, if he prefer active life, it is not impossible that, with *his* subtlety, hardihood, and unscrupulousness, in a land where the simple process of naturalisation converts the alien at once into a child of the family, he might rise to the president's chair; might have a statue at his death; and afterwards a life in three volumes quarto, with no hint glancing towards No. 29 Ratcliffe Highway. But all depends on the next ninety seconds. Within that time there is a sharp turn to be taken; there is a wrong turn, and a right turn. Should his better angel guide him to the right one, all may yet go well as regards this world's prosperity. But behold! in two minutes from this point we shall see him take the wrong one: and then Nemesis will be at his heels with ruin perfect and sudden.

Meantime, if the murderer allows himself to loiter, the ropemaker overhead does *not*. Well he knows that the poor child's fate is on the edge of a razor: for all turns upon the alarm being raised before the murderer reaches her bedside. And at this very moment, whilst desperate agitation is nearly paralysing his fingers, he hears the sullen stealthy step of the murderer creeping up through the darkness. It had been the expectation of the journeyman (founded on the clamorous uproar with which the street-door was slammed) that Williams, when disposable for his up-stairs work, would come racing at a long jubilant gallop, and with a tiger roar; and perhaps, on his natural instincts, he would have done so. But this mode of approach, which was of dreadful effect when applied to a case of surprise, became dangerous in the case of people who might by this time have been placed fully upon their guard. The step which he had heard was on the staircase—but upon which stair? He fancied upon the lowest: and in a movement so slow and cautious, even this might make all the difference; yet might it not have been the tenth, twelfth, or fourteenth stair? Never, perhaps, in this world did any man feel his own responsibility so cruelly loaded and strained, as at this moment did the poor journeyman on behalf of the slumbering child. Lose but two seconds, through awkwardness or through the self-counteractions of panic, and for *her* the total difference arose between life and death. Still there is a hope: and nothing can so frightfully expound the hellish nature of him whose baleful shadow,

to speak astrologically, at this moment darkens the house of life, than the simple expression of the ground on which this hope rested. The journeyman felt sure that the murderer would not be satisfied to kill the poor child whilst unconscious. This would be to defeat his whole purpose in murdering her at all. To an epicure in murder such as Williams, it would be taking away the very sting of the enjoyment, if the poor child should be suffered to drink off the bitter cup of death without fully apprehending the misery of the situation. But this luckily would require time: the double confusion of mind, first, from being roused up at so unusual an hour, and, secondly, from the horror of the occasion when explained to her, would at first produce fainting, or some mode of insensibility or distraction, such as must occupy a considerable time. The logic of the case, in short, all rested upon the *ultra* fiendishness of Williams. Were he likely to be content with the mere fact of the child's death, apart from the process and leisurely expansion of its mental agony—in that case there would be no hope. But, because our present murderer is fastidiously finical in his exactions—a sort of martinet in the scenical grouping and draping of the circumstances in his murders—therefore it is that hope becomes reasonable, since all such refinements of preparation demand time. Murders of mere necessity Williams was obliged to hurry; but, in a murder of pure voluptuousness, entirely disinterested, where no hostile witness was to be removed, no extra booty to be gained, and no revenge to be gratified, it is clear that to hurry would be altogether to ruin. If this child, therefore, is to be saved, it will be on pure æsthetical considerations.*

But all considerations whatever are at this moment suddenly cut short. A second step is heard on the stairs, but still stealthy and cautious; a third—and then the child's doom seems fixed. But just at that moment all is ready. The window is wide open; the rope is swinging free; the journeyman has launched himself; and already he is in the first stage of his descent. Simply by the weight of his

* Let the reader, who is disposed to regard as exaggerated or romantic the pure fiendishness imputed to Williams, recollect that, except for the luxurious purpose of basking and revelling in the anguish of dying despair, he had no motive at all, small or great, for attempting the murder of this young girl. She had seen nothing, heard nothing—was fast asleep, and her door was closed; so that, as a witness against him, he knew that she was as useless as any one of the three corpses. And yet he *was* making preparations for her murder, when the alarm in the street interrupted him.

person he descended, and by the resistance of his hands he retarded the descent. The danger was, that the rope should run too smoothly through his hands, and that by too rapid an acceleration of pace he should come violently to the ground. Happily he was able to resist the descending impetus: the knots of the splicings furnished a succession of retardations. But the rope proved shorter by four or five feet than he had calculated: ten or eleven feet from the ground he hung suspended in the air; speechless for the present, through long-continued agitation; and not daring to drop boldly on the rough carriage pavement, lest he should fracture his legs. But the night was not dark, as it had been on occasion of the Marr murders. And yet, for purposes of criminal police, it was by accident worse than the darkest night that ever hid a murder or baffled a pursuit. London, from east to west, was covered with a deep pall (rising from the river) of universal fog. Hence it happened, that for twenty or thirty seconds the young man hanging in the air was not observed. His white shirt at length attracted notice. Three or four people ran up, and received him in their arms, all anticipating some dreadful annunciation. To what house did he belong? Even *that* was not instantly apparent; but he pointed with his finger to Williamson's door, and said in a half-choking whisper—"Marr's murderer, now at work!"

All explained itself in a moment: the silent language of the fact made its own eloquent revelation. The mysterious exterminator of No. 29 Ratcliffe Highway had visited another house; and, behold! one man only had escaped through the air, and in his night-dress, to tell the tale. Superstitiously, there was something to check the pursuit of this unintelligible criminal. Morally, and in the interests of vindictive justice, there was everything to rouse, quicken, and sustain it.

Yes, Marr's murderer—the man of mystery—was again at work; at this moment perhaps extinguishing some lamp of life, and not at any remote place, but here—in the very house which the listeners to this dreadful announcement were actually touching. The chaos and blind uproar of the scene which followed, measured by the crowded reports in the journals of many subsequent days, and in one feature of that case, has never to my knowledge had its parallel; or, if a parallel, only in one case—what followed, I mean, on the acquittal of the seven bishops at Westminster in 1688. At present there was more than passionate enthusiasm.

The frenzied movement of mixed horror and exultation—the ululation of vengeance which ascended instantaneously from the individual street, and then by a sublime sort of magnetic contagion from all the adjacent streets, can be adequately expressed only by a rapturous passage in Shelley:—

“The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness
 Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying
 Upon the wings of fear:—From his dull madness
 The starveling waked, and died in joy: the dying,
 Among the corpses in stark agony lying,
 Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope
 Closed their faint eyes: from house to house replying
 With loud acclaim the living shook heaven’s cope,
 And fill’d the startled earth with echoes.” *

There was something, indeed, half inexplicable in the instantaneous interpretation of the gathering shout according to its true meaning. In fact, the deadly roar of vengeance, and its sublime unity, *could* point in this district only to the one demon whose idea had brooded and tyrannised, for twelve days, over the general heart: every door, every window in the neighbourhood, flew open as if at a word of command; multitudes, without waiting for the regular means of egress, leaped down at once from the windows on the lower storey; sick men rose from their beds; in one instance, as if expressly to verify the image of Shelley (in v. 4, 5, 6, 7), a man whose death had been looked for through some days, and who actually *did* die on the following day, rose, armed himself with a sword, and descended in his shirt into the street. The chance was a good one, and the mob were made aware of it, for catching the wolfish dog in the high noon and carnival of his bloody revels—in the very centre of his own shambles. For a moment the mob was self-baffled by its own numbers and its own fury. But even that fury felt the call for self-control. It was evident that the massy street-door must be driven in, since there was no longer any living person to co-operate with their efforts from within, excepting only a female child. Crow-bars dexterously applied in one minute threw the door out of hangings, and the people entered like a torrent. It may be guessed with what fret and irritation to their consuming fury, a signal of pause and absolute silence was made by a person of local importance. In the hope of receiving some useful communication, the mob became silent. “Now listen,” said the man of authority, “and we shall learn

* “Revolt of Islam,” canto xii.

whether he is above-stairs or below." Immediately a noise was heard as if of some one forcing windows, and clearly the sound came from a bedroom above. Yes, the fact was apparent that the murderer was even yet in the house: he had been caught in a trap. Not having made himself familiar with the details of Williamson's house, to all appearance he had suddenly become a prisoner in one of the upper rooms. Towards this the crowd now rushed impetuously. The door, however, was found to be slightly fastened; and, at the moment when this was forced, a loud crash of the window, both glass and frame, announced that the wretch had made his escape. He had leaped down; and several persons in the crowd, who burned with the general fury, leaped after him. These persons had not troubled themselves about the nature of the ground; but now, on making an examination of it with torches, they reported it to be an inclined plane, or embankment of clay, very wet and adhesive. The prints of the man's footsteps were deeply impressed upon the clay, and therefore easily traced up to the summit of the embankment; but it was perceived at once that pursuit would be useless, from the density of the mist. Two feet ahead of you, a man was entirely withdrawn from your power of identification; and, on overtaking him, you could not venture to challenge him as the same whom you had lost sight of. Never, through the course of a whole century, could there be a night expected more propitious to an escaping criminal: means of disguise Williams now had in excess; and the dens were innumerable in the neighbourhood of the river that could have sheltered him for years from troublesome inquiries. But favours are thrown away upon the reckless and the thankless. That night, when the turning-point offered itself for his whole future career, Williams took the wrong turn; for, out of mere indolence, he took the turn to his old lodgings—that place which, in all England, he had just now the most reason to shun.

Meantime the crowd had thoroughly searched the premises of Williamson. The first inquiry was for the young grand-daughter. Williams, it was evident, had gone into her room: but in this room apparently it was that the sudden uproar in the streets had surprised him; after which his undivided attention had been directed to the windows, since through these only any retreat had been left open to him. Even this retreat he owed only to the fog and to the hurry of the moment, and to the difficulty of approaching

the premises by the rear. The little girl was naturally agitated by the influx of strangers at that hour; but otherwise through the humane precautions of the neighbours, she was preserved from all knowledge of the dreadful events that had occurred whilst she herself was sleeping. Her poor old grandfather was still missing, until the crowd descended into the cellar; he was then found lying prostrate on the cellar floor: apparently he had been thrown down from the top of the cellar stairs, and with so much violence, that one leg was broken. After he had been thus disabled, Williams had gone down to him, and cut his throat. There was much discussion at the time, in some of the public journals, upon the possibility of reconciling these incidents with other circumstantialities of the case, supposing that only one man had been concerned in the affair. That there *was* only one man concerned, seems to be certain. One only was seen or heard at Marr's: one only, and beyond all doubt the same man, was seen by the young journeyman in Mrs. Williamson's parlour; and one only was traced by his footmarks on the clay embankment. Apparently the course which he had pursued was this: he had introduced himself to Williamson by ordering some beer. This order would oblige the old man to go down into the cellar; Williams would wait until he had reached it, and would then "slam" and lock the street-door in the violent way described. Williamson would come up in agitation upon hearing this violence. The murderer, aware that he would do so, met him, no doubt, at the head of the cellar stairs, and threw him down; after which he would go down to consummate the murder in his ordinary way. All this would occupy a minute, or a minute and a-half; and in that way the interval would be accounted for that elapsed between the alarming sound of the street-door as heard by the journeyman, and the lamentable outcry of the female servant. It is evident also, that the reason why no cry whatsoever had been heard from the lips of Mrs. Williamson, is due to the positions of the parties as I have sketched them. Coming behind Mrs. Williamson, unseen therefore, and from her deafness unheard, the murderer would inflict entire abolition of consciousness while she was yet unaware of his presence. But with the servant, who had unavoidably witnessed the attack upon her mistress, the murderer could not obtain the same fullness of advantage; and *she* therefore had time for making an agonising ejaculation.

It has been mentioned, that the murderer of the Marrs was not for nearly a fortnight so much as suspected ; meaning that, previously to the Williamson murder, no vestige of any ground for suspicion in any direction whatever had occurred either to the general public or to the police. But there were two very limited exceptions to this state of absolute ignorance. Some of the magistrates had in their possession something which, when closely examined, offered a very probable means for tracing the criminal. But as yet they had *not* traced him. Until the Friday morning next after the destruction of the Williamsons, they had not published the important fact, that upon the ship-carpenter's mallet (with which, as regarded the stunning or disabling process, the murders had been achieved) were inscribed the letters "J. P." This mallet had, by a strange oversight on the part of the murderer, been left behind in Marr's shop ; and it is an interesting fact, therefore, that, had the villain been intercepted by the brave pawnbroker, he would have been met virtually disarmed. This public notification was made officially on the Friday, viz., on the thirteenth day after the first murder. And it was instantly followed (as will be seen) by a most important result. Meantime, within the secrecy of one single bedroom in all London, it is a fact that Williams had been whisperingly the object of very deep suspicion from the very first—that is, within that same hour which witnessed the Marr tragedy. And singular it is, that the suspicion was due entirely to his own folly. Williams lodged, in company with other men of various nations, at a public-house. In a large dormitory there were arranged five or six beds ; these were occupied by artisans, generally of respectable character. One or two Englishmen there were, one or two Scotchmen, three or four Germans, and Williams, whose birth-place was not certainly known. On the fatal Saturday night, about half-past one o'clock, when Williams returned from his dreadful labours, he found the English and Scotch party asleep, but the Germans awake : one of them was sitting up with a lighted candle in his hands, and reading aloud to the other two. Upon this, Williams said, in an angry and very peremptory tone, " Oh, put that candle out ; put it out directly : we shall all be burned in our beds." Had the British party in the room been awake, Mr. Williams would have roused a mutinous protest against this arrogant mandate. But Germans are generally mild and facile in their tempers ; so the light was complaisantly extinguished.

Yet, as there were no curtains, it struck the Germans that the danger was really none at all ; for bed-clothes, massed upon each other, will no more burn than the leaves of a closed book. Privately, therefore, the Germans drew an inference, that Mr. Williams must have had some urgent motive for withdrawing his own person and dress from observation. What this motive might be, the next day's news diffused all over London, and of course at this house, not two furlongs from Marr's shop, made awfully evident ; and, as may well be supposed, the suspicion was communicated to the other members of the dormitory. All of them, however, were aware of the legal danger attaching, under English law, to insinuations against a man, even if true, which might not admit of proof. In reality, had Williams used the most obvious precautions, had he simply walked down to the Thames (not a stone's-throw distant), and flung two of his implements into the river, no conclusive proof could have been adduced against him. And he might have realised the scheme of Courvoisier (the murderer of Lord William Russell)—viz., have sought each separate month's support in a separate well-concerted murder. The party in the dormitory, meantime, were satisfied themselves, but waited for evidences that might satisfy others. No sooner, therefore, had the official notice been published as to the initials J. P. on the mallet, than every man in the house recognised at once the well-known initials of an honest Norwegian ship-carpenter, John Petersen, who had worked in the English dockyards until the present year ; but, having occasion to revisit his native land, had left his box of tools in the garrets of this inn. These garrets were now searched. Petersen's tool-chest was found, but wanting the mallet ; and, on further examination, another overwhelming discovery was made. The surgeon, who examined the corpses at Williamson's, had given it as his opinion that the throats were not cut by means of a razor, but of some implement differently shaped. It was now remembered that Williams had recently borrowed a large French knife of peculiar construction ; and accordingly, from a heap of old lumber and rags, there was soon extricated a waistcoat, which the whole house could swear to as recently worn by Williams. In this waistcoat, and glued by gore to the lining of its pockets, was found the French knife. Next, it was matter of notoriety to everybody in the inn, that Williams ordinarily wore at present a pair of creaking shoes, and a brown surtout lined with

silk. Many other presumptions seemed scarcely called for. Williams was immediately apprehended, and briefly examined. This was on the Friday. On the Saturday morning (*viz.*, fourteen days from the Marr murders) he was again brought up. The circumstantial evidence was overwhelming; Williams watched its course, but said very little. At the close, he was fully committed for trial at the next sessions; and it is needless to say, that, on his road to prison, he was pursued by mobs so fierce, that, under ordinary circumstances, there would have been small hope of escaping summary vengeance. But upon this occasion a powerful escort had been provided; so that he was safely lodged in jail. In this particular jail at this time, the regulation was, that at five o'clock P.M. all the prisoners on the criminal side should be finally locked up for the night, and without candles. For fourteen hours (that is, until seven o'clock on the next morning) they were left unvisited, and in total darkness. Time, therefore, Williams had for committing suicide. The means in other respects were small. One iron bar there was, meant (if I remember) for the suspension of a lamp; upon this he had hanged himself by his braces. At what hour was uncertain: some people fancied at midnight. And in that case, precisely at the hour when, fourteen days before, he had been spreading horror and desolation through the quiet family of poor Marr, now was he forced into drinking of the same cup, presented to his lips by the same accursed hands.

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The case of the M'Keans, which has been specially alluded to, merits also a slight rehearsal for the dreadful picturesqueness of some two or three amongst its circumstances. The scene of this murder was at a rustic inn, some few miles (I think) from Manchester; and the advantageous situation of this inn it was, out of which arose the twofold temptations of the case. Generally speaking, an inn argues, of course, a close cincture of neighbours—as the original motive for opening such an establishment. But, in this case, the house individually was solitary, so that no interruption was to be looked for from any persons living within reach of screams; and yet, on the other hand, the circumjacent vicinity was eminently populous; as one consequence of which, a benefit club had established its weekly rendezvous in this inn, and left the pecuniary accumulations in their club-room, under the custody of the landlord. This fund arose often to a considerable amount, fifty or

seventy pounds, before it was transferred to the hands of a banker. Here, therefore, was a treasure worth some little risk, and a situation that promised next to none. These attractive circumstances had, by accident, become accurately known to one or both of the two M'Kears; and, unfortunately, at a moment of overwhelming misfortune to themselves. They were hawkers; and, until lately, had borne most respectable characters: but some mercantile crash had overtaken them with utter ruin, in which their joint capital had been swallowed up to the last shilling. This sudden prostration had made them desperate: their own little property had been swallowed up in a large *social* catastrophe, and society at large they looked upon as accountable to them for a robbery. In preying, therefore, upon society, they considered themselves as pursuing a wild natural justice of retaliation. The money aimed at did certainly assume the character of public money, being the product of many separate subscriptions. They forgot, however, that in the murderous acts, which too certainly they meditated as preliminaries to the robbery, they could plead no such imaginary social precedent. In dealing with a family that seemed almost helpless, if all went smoothly, they relied entirely upon their own bodily strength. They were stout young men, twenty-eight to thirty-two years old; somewhat undersized as to height; but squarely built, deep-chested, broad-shouldered, and so beautifully formed, as regarded the symmetry of their limbs and their articulations, that, after their execution, the bodies were privately exhibited by the surgeons of the Manchester Infirmary, as objects of statuesque interest. On the other hand, the household which they proposed to attack consisted of the following four persons:—1. the landlord, a stoutish farmer—but *him* they intended to disable by a trick then newly introduced amongst robbers, and termed *hocussing*, *i.e.*, clandestinely drugging the liquor of the victim with laudanum; 2. the landlord's wife; 3. a young servant-woman; 4. a boy, twelve or fourteen years old. The danger was, that out of four persons, scattered by possibility over a house which had two separate exits, one at least might escape, and by better acquaintance with the adjacent paths, might succeed in giving an alarm to some of the houses a furlong distant. Their final resolution was, to be guided by circumstances as to the mode of conducting the affair; and yet, as it seemed essential to success that they should assume

the air of strangers to each other, it was necessary that they should preconcert some general outline of their plan; since it would on this scheme be impossible, without awaking violent suspicions, to make any communications under the eyes of the family. This outline included, at the least, one murder: so much was settled; but, otherwise, their subsequent proceedings make it evident that they wished to have as little bloodshed as was consistent with their final object. On the appointed day, they presented themselves separately at the rustic inn, and at different hours. One came as early as four o'clock in the afternoon; the other not until half-past seven. They saluted each other distantly and shyly; and, though occasionally exchanging a few words in the character of strangers, did not seem disposed to any familiar intercourse. With the landlord, however, on his return about eight o'clock from Manchester, one of the brothers entered into a lively conversation: invited him to take a tumbler of punch; and, at a moment when the landlord's absence from the room allowed it, poured into the punch a spoonful of laudanum. Some time after this, the clock struck ten; upon which the elder M'Kean, professing to be weary, asked to be shown up to his bedroom: for each brother, immediately on arriving, had engaged a bed. On this, the poor servant-girl presented herself with a bed-candle to light him upstairs. At this critical moment the family were distributed thus:—the landlord, stupified with the horrid narcotic which he had drunk, had retired to a private room adjoining the public room, for the purpose of reclining upon a sofa: and he, luckily for his own safety, was looked upon as entirely incapacitated for action. The landlady was occupied with her husband. And thus the younger M'Kean was left alone in the public room. He rose, therefore, softly, and placed himself at the foot of the stairs which his brother had just ascended, so as to be sure of intercepting any fugitive from the bedroom above. Into that room the elder M'Kean was ushered by the servant, who pointed to two beds—one of which was already half occupied by the boy, and the other empty: in these, she intimated that the two strangers must dispose of themselves for the night, according to any arrangement that they might agree upon. Saying this, she presented him with the candle, which he in a moment placed upon the table; and, intercepting her retreat from the room, threw his arms around her neck with a gesture as though he meant

to kiss her. This was evidently what she herself anticipated, and endeavoured to prevent. Her horror may be imagined, when she felt the perfidious hand that clasped her neck armed with a razor, and violently cutting her throat. She was hardly able to utter one scream, before she sank powerless upon the floor. This dreadful spectacle was witnessed by the boy, who was not asleep, but had presence of mind enough instantly to close his eyes. The murderer advanced hastily to the bed, and anxiously examined the expression of the boy's features: satisfied he was not, and he then placed his hand upon the boy's heart, in order to judge by its beatings whether he were agitated or not. This was a dreadful trial: and no doubt the counterfeit sleep would immediately have been detected, when suddenly a dreadful spectacle drew off the attention of the murderer. Solemnly, and in ghostly silence, uprose in her dying delirium the murdered girl; she stood upright, she walked steadily for a moment or two, she bent her steps towards the door. The murderer turned away to pursue her; and at that moment the boy, feeling that his one solitary chance was to fly whilst this scene was in progress, bounded out of bed. On the landing at the head of the stairs was one murderer, at the foot of the stairs was the other: who could believe that the boy had the shadow of a chance for escaping? And yet, in the most natural way, he surmounted all hindrances. In the boy's horror, he laid his left hand on the balustrade, and took a flying leap over it, which landed him at the bottom of the stairs, without having touched a single stair. He had thus effectually passed one of the murderers: the other, it is true, was still to be passed; and this would have been impossible but for a sudden accident. The landlady had been alarmed by the faint scream of the young woman; had hurried from her private room to the girl's assistance; but at the foot of the stairs had been intercepted by the younger brother, and was at this moment struggling with *him*. The confusion of this life-and-death conflict had allowed the boy to whirl past them. Luckily he took a turn into a kitchen, out of which was a back-door, fastened by a single bolt, that ran freely at a touch; and through this door he rushed into the open fields. But at this moment the elder brother was set free for pursuit by the death of the poor girl. There is no doubt, that in her delirium the image moving through her thoughts was that of the club, which met once a week. She fancied it no doubt sitting; and to this room, for help

and for safety, she staggered along; she entered it, and within the doorway once more she dropped down, and instantly expired. Her murderer, who had followed her closely, now saw himself set at liberty for the pursuit of the boy. At this critical moment, all was at stake; unless the boy were caught, the enterprise was ruined. He passed his brother, therefore, and the landlady without pausing, and rushed through the open door into the fields. By a single second, perhaps, he was too late. The boy was keenly aware, that if he continued in sight, he would have no chance of escaping from a powerful young man. He made, therefore, at once for a ditch, into which he tumbled headlong. Had the murderer ventured to make a leisurely examination of the nearest ditch, he would easily have found the boy—made so conspicuous by his white shirt. But he lost all heart, upon failing at once to arrest the boy's flight. And every succeeding second made his despair the greater. If the boy had really effected his escape to the neighbouring farm-houses, a party of men might be gathered within five minutes; and already it might have become difficult for himself and his brother, unacquainted with the field paths, to evade being intercepted. Nothing remained, therefore, but to summon his brother away. Thus it happened that the landlady, though mangled, escaped with life, and eventually recovered. The landlord owed his safety to the stupifying potion. And the baffled murderers had the misery of knowing that their dreadful crime had been altogether profitless. The road, indeed, was now open to the club-room; and, probably, forty seconds would have sufficed to carry off the box of treasure, which afterwards might have been burst open and pillaged at leisure. But the fear of intercepting enemies was too strongly upon them; and they fled rapidly by a road which carried them actually within six feet of the lurking boy. That night they passed through Manchester. When daylight returned, they slept in a thicket twenty miles distant from the scene of their guilty attempt. On the second and third nights, they pursued their march on foot, resting again during the day. About sunrise on the fourth morning, they were entering some village near Kirby Lonsdale, in Westmoreland. They must have designedly quitted the direct line of route; for their object was Ayrshire, of which county they were natives; and the regular road would have led them through Shap, Penrith, Carlisle. Probably they were seeking to elude the persecution of the stage-coaches, which, for the

last thirty hours, had been scattering at all the inns and roadside *cabarets* hand-bills describing their persons and dress. It happened (perhaps through design) that on this fourth morning they had separated, so as to enter the village ten minutes apart from each other. They were exhausted and footsore. In this condition it was easy to stop them. A blacksmith had silently reconnoitred them, and compared their appearance with the descriptions of the hand-bills. They were then easily overtaken, and separately arrested. Their trial and condemnation speedily followed at Lancaster; and in those days it followed, of course, that they were executed. Otherwise, their case fell so far within the sheltering limits of what would *now* be regarded as extenuating circumstances—that, whilst a murder more or less was not to repel them from their object, very evidently they were anxious to economise the bloodshed as much as possible. Immeasurable, therefore, was the interval which divided them from the monster Williams. They perished on the scaffold: Williams, as I have said, by his own hand; and, in obedience to the law as it then stood, he was buried in the centre of a *quadrivium*, or conflux of four roads (in this case four streets), with a stake driven through his heart. And over him drives for ever the uproar of unresting London!

EXPLANATORY NOTICE

PREFIXED TO THE EDITION OF 1856

THE paper on “Murder as one of the Fine Arts” seemed to exact from me some account of Williams, the dreadful London murderer of the last generation; not only because the amateurs had so much insisted on his merit as the supreme of artists for grandeur of design and breadth of style; and because, apart from this momentary connection with my paper, the man himself merited a record for his matchless audacity, combined with so much of snaky subtlety, and even insinuating amiableness in his demeanour—but also because, apart from the man himself, the *works* of the man (those two of them especially which so profoundly impressed the nation in 1812) were in themselves, for dramatic effect, the most impressive on record: Southey pronounced their pre-eminence, when he said to me, that they ranked amongst the few domestic events which, by the depth and the expansion of horror attending them, had risen to the dignity of a *national* interest. I may add, that this interest benefited also by the mystery which invested the murders; mystery as to various points, but especially as respected one important

question, Had the murderer any accomplice ? * There was, therefore, reason enough, both in the man's hellish character, and in the mystery which surrounded him, for this Postscript to the original paper ; since, in a lapse of forty-two years, both the man and his deeds had faded away from the knowledge of the present generation ; but still I am sensible that my record is far too diffuse. Feeling this at the very time of writing, I was yet unable to correct it ; so little self-control was I able to exercise under the afflicting agitations, and the unconquerable impatience of my nervous malady.

* Upon a large overbalance of probabilities, it was, however, definitely agreed amongst amateurs that Williams must have been alone in these atrocities. Meantime, amongst the colourable presumptions on the other side, was this :—Some hours after the last murder, a man was apprehended at Barnet (the first stage from London on a principal north road), encumbered with a quantity of plate. How he came by it, or whither he was going, he steadfastly refused to say. In the daily journals, which he was allowed to see, he read with eagerness the police examinations of Williams ; and on the same day which announced the catastrophe of Williams, he also committed suicide in his cell.

THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

SECTION THE FIRST

THE GLORY OF MOTION

SOME twenty or more years before I matriculated at Oxford, Mr. Palmer, at that time M.P. for Bath, had accomplished two things, very hard to do on our little planet, the Earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in comets—he had invented mail-coaches, and he had married the daughter * of a duke. He was, therefore, just twice as great a man as Galileo, who did certainly invent (or, which is the same thing, † discover) the satellites of Jupiter, those very next things extant to mail-coaches in the two capital pretensions of speed and keeping time, but, on the other hand, who did *not* marry the daughter of a duke.

These mail-coaches, as organised by Mr. Palmer, are entitled to a circumstantial notice from myself, having had so large a share in developing the anarchies of my subsequent dreams; an agency which they accomplished, first, through velocity, at that time unprecedented—for they first revealed the glory of motion; secondly, through grand effects for the eye between lamp-light and the darkness upon solitary roads; thirdly, through animal beauty and power so often displayed in the class of horses selected for this mail service; fourthly, through the conscious presence of a central intellect, that, in the midst of vast distances ‡—

* Lady Madeline Gordon.

† "*The same thing*":—Thus, in the calendar of the Church Festivals, the discovery of the true cross (by Helen, the mother of Constantine) is recorded (and one might think—with the express consciousness of sarcasm) as the *Invention* of the Cross.

‡ "*Vast distances*":—One case was familiar to mail-coach travellers, where two mails in opposite directions, north and south, starting at the same minute from points six hundred miles apart, met almost constantly at a particular bridge which bisected the total distance.

of storms, of darkness, of danger—overruled all obstacles into one steady co-operation to a national result. For my own feeling, this post-office service spoke as by some mighty orchestra, where a thousand instruments, all disregarding each other, and so far in danger of discord, yet all obedient as slaves to the supreme *baton* of some great leader, terminate in a perfection of harmony like that of heart, brain, and lungs, in a healthy animal organisation. But, finally, that particular element in this whole combination which most impressed myself, and through which it is that to this hour Mr. Palmer's mail-coach system tyrannises over my dreams by terror and terrific beauty, lay in the awful *political* mission which at that time it fulfilled, The mail-coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo. These were the harvests that, in the grandeur of their reaping, redeemed the tears and blood in which they had been sown. Neither was the meanest peasant so much below the grandeur and the sorrow of the times as to confound battles such as these, which were gradually moulding the destinies of Christendom, with the vulgar conflicts of ordinary warfare, so often no more than gladiatorial trials of national prowess. The victories of England in this stupendous contest rose of themselves as natural *Te Deums* to heaven; and it was felt by the thoughtful that such victories, at such a crisis of general prostration, were not more beneficial to ourselves than finally to France, our enemy, and to the nations of all western or central Europe, through whose pusillanimity it was that the French domination had prospered.

The mail-coach, as the national organ for publishing these mighty events thus diffusively influential, became itself a spiritualised and glorified object to an impassioned heart; and naturally, in the Oxford of that day, *all* hearts were impassioned, as being all (or nearly all) in *early* manhood. In most universities there is one single college; in Oxford there were five-and-twenty, all of which were peopled by young men, the *élite* of their own generation; not boys, but men; none under eighteen. In some of these many colleges, the custom permitted the student to keep what are called "short terms"; that is, the four terms of Michaelmas, Lent, Easter, and Act, were kept by a residence, in the aggregate, of ninety-one days, or thirteen weeks. Under this interrupted residence, it was possible

that a student might have a reason for going down to his home four times in the year. This made eight journeys to and fro. But, as these homes lay dispersed through all the shires of the island, and most of us disdained all coaches except his majesty's mail, no city out of London could pretend to so extensive a connection with Mr. Palmer's establishment as Oxford. Three mails, at the least, I remember as passing every day through Oxford, and benefiting by my personal patronage—viz., the Worcester, the Gloucester, and the Holyhead mail. Naturally, therefore, it became a point of some interest with us, whose journeys revolved every six weeks on an average, to look a little into the executive details of the system. With some of these Mr. Palmer had no concern; they rested upon bye-laws enacted by posting-houses for their own benefit, and upon other bye-laws, equally stern, enacted by the inside passengers for the illustration of their own haughty exclusiveness. These last were of a nature to rouse our scorn, from which the transition was not very long to systematic mutiny. Up to this time, say 1804, or 1805 (the year of Trafalgar), it had been the fixed assumption of the four inside people (as an old tradition of all public carriages derived from the reign of Charles II.), that they, the illustrious quaternion, constituted a porcelain variety of the human race, whose dignity would have been compromised by exchanging one word of civility with the three miserable delf-ware outsides. Even to have kicked an outsider, might have been held to attain the foot concerned in that operation; so that, perhaps, it would have required an act of parliament to restore its purity of blood. What words, then, could express the horror, and the sense of treason, in that case, which *had* happened, where all three outsides (the trinity of Pariahs) made a vain attempt to sit down at the same breakfast-table or dinner-table with the consecrated four? I myself witnessed such an attempt; and on that occasion a benevolent old gentleman endeavoured to soothe his three holy associates, by suggesting that, if the outsides were indicted for this criminal attempt at the next assizes, the court would regard it as a case of lunacy, or *delirium tremens*, rather than of treason. England owes much of her grandeur to the depth of the aristocratic element in her social composition, when pulling against her strong democracy. I am not the man to laugh at it. But sometimes, undoubtedly, it expressed itself in comic shapes. The course taken with the infatuated outsiders, in the par-

ticular attempt which I have noticed, was, that the waiter, beckoning them away from the privileged *salle-à-manger*, sang out, "This way, my good men," and then enticed these good men away to the kitchen. But that plan had not always answered. Sometimes, though rarely, cases occurred where the intruders, being stronger than usual, or more vicious than usual, resolutely refused to budge, and so far carried their point, as to have a separate table arranged for themselves in a corner of the general room. Yet, if an Indian screen could be found ample enough to plant them out from the very eyes of the high table, or *dais*, it then became possible to assume as a fiction of law—that the three delf fellows, after all, were not present. They could be ignored by the porcelain men, under the maxim, that objects not appearing, and not existing, are governed by the same logical construction.*

Such being, at that time, the usages of mail-coaches, what was to be done by us of young Oxford? We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insides themselves as often very questionable characters—were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignities? If our dress and bearing sheltered us, generally, from the suspicion of being "raff" (the name at that period for "snobs" †), we really *were* such constructively, by the place we assumed. If we did not submit to the deep shadow of eclipse, we entered at least the skirts of its penumbra. And the analogy of theatres was valid against us, where no man can complain of the annoyances incident to the pit or gallery, having his instant remedy in paying the higher price of the boxes. But the soundness of this analogy we disputed. In the case of the theatre, it cannot be pretended that the inferior situations have any separate attractions, unless the pit may be supposed to have an advantage for the purposes of the critic or the dramatic reporter. But the critic or reporter is a rarity. For most people, the sole benefit is in the price. Now, on the contrary, the outside of the mail had its own incommunicable advantages. These we could not forego. The higher price

* *De non apparentibus*, etc.

† "*Snobs*," and its antithesis, "*nobs*," arose among the internal factions of shoemakers perhaps ten years later. Possibly enough, the terms may have existed much earlier; but they were then first made known, picturesquely and effectively, by a trial at some assizes which happened to fix the public attention.

we would willingly have paid, but not the price connected with the condition of riding inside ; which condition we pronounced insufferable. The air, the freedom of prospect, the proximity to the horses, the elevation of seat—these were what we required ; but, above all, the certain anticipation of purchasing occasional opportunities of driving.

Such was the difficulty which pressed us ; and under the coercion of this difficulty, we instituted a searching inquiry into the true quality and valuation of the different apartments about the mail. We conducted this inquiry on metaphysical principles ; and it was ascertained satisfactorily, that the roof of the coach, which by some weak men had been called the attics, and by some the garrets, was in reality the drawing-room ; in which drawing-room the box was the chief ottoman or sofa ; whilst it appeared that the *inside*, which had been traditionally regarded as the only room tenantable by gentlemen, was, in fact, the coal-cellar in disguise.

Great wits jump. The very same idea had not long before struck the celestial intellect of China. Amongst the presents carried out by our first embassy to that country was a state-coach. It had been specially selected as a personal gift by George III. ; but the exact mode of using it was an intense mystery to Pekin. The ambassador, indeed (Lord Macartney), had made some imperfect explanations upon this point ; but, as his excellency communicated these in a diplomatic whisper, at the very moment of his departure, the celestial intellect was very feebly illuminated, and it became necessary to call a cabinet council on the grand state question, “ Where was the emperor to sit ? ” The hammer-cloth happened to be unusually gorgeous ; and partly on that consideration, but partly also because the box offered the most elevated seat, was nearest to the moon, and undeniably went foremost, it was resolved by acclamation that the box was the imperial throne, and for the scoundrel who drove, he might sit where he could find a perch. The horses, therefore, being harnessed, solemnly his imperial majesty ascended his new English throne under a flourish of trumpets, having the first lord of the treasury on his right hand, and the chief jester on his left. Pekin gloried in the spectacle ; and in the whole flowery people, constructively present by representation, there was but one discontented person, and *that* was the coachman. This mutinous individual audaciously shouted, “ Where am

I to sit ? " But the privy council, incensed by his disloyalty, unanimously opened the door, and kicked him into the inside. He had all the inside places to himself ; but such is the rapacity of ambition, that he was still dissatisfied. " I say," he cried out in an extempore petition, addressed to the emperor through the window—" I say, how am I to catch hold of the reins ? "—" Anyhow," was the imperial answer ; " don't trouble *me*, man, in my glory. How catch the reins ? Why, through the windows, through the keyholes—*anyhow*." Finally this contumacious coachman lengthened the check-strings into a sort of jury-reins, communicating with the horses ; with these he drove as steadily as Pekin had any right to expect. The emperor returned after the briefest of circuits ; he descended in great pomp from his throne, with the severest resolution never to remount it. A public thanksgiving was ordered for his majesty's happy escape from the disease of broken neck ; and the state-coach was dedicated thenceforward as a votive offering to the god Fo, Fo—whom the learned more accurately called Fi, Fi. *Wandering Fools and Fools*

A revolution of this same Chinese character did young Oxford of that era effect in the constitution of mail-coach society. It was a perfect French revolution ; and we had good reason to say, *ça ira*. In fact, it soon became *too* popular. The " public"—a well-known character, particularly disagreeable, though slightly respectable, and notorious for affecting the chief seats in synagogues—had at first loudly opposed this revolution ; but when the opposition showed itself to be ineffectual, our disagreeable friend went into it with headlong zeal. At first it was a sort of race between us ; and, as the public is usually from thirty to fifty years old, naturally we of young Oxford, that averaged about twenty, had the advantage. Then the public took to bribing, giving fees to horse-keepers, etc., who hired out their persons as warming-pans on the box-seat. *That*, you know, was shocking to all moral sensibilities. Come to bribery, said we, and there is an end to all morality, Aristotle's, Zeno's, Cicero's, or anybody's. And, besides, of what use was it ? For *we* bribed also. And as our bribes to those of the public were as five shillings to sixpence, here again young Oxford had the advantage. But the contest was ruinous to the principles of the stables connected with the mails. This whole corporation was constantly bribed, re-bribed, and often sur-rebribed ; a mail-coach yard was like the hustings in a contested election ; and a horse-

keeper, ostler, or helper, was held by the philosophical at that time to be the most corrupt character in the nation.

There was an impression upon the public mind, natural enough from the continually augmenting velocity of the mail, but quite erroneous, that an outside seat on this class of carriages was a post of danger. On the contrary, I maintained that, if a man had become nervous from some gipsy prediction in his childhood, allocating to a particular moon now approaching some unknown danger, and he should inquire earnestly, "Whither can I fly for shelter? Is a prison the safest retreat? or a lunatic hospital? or the British Museum?" I should have replied, "Oh, no; I'll tell you what to do. Take lodgings for the next forty days on the box of his majesty's mail. Nobody can touch you there. If it is by bills at ninety days after date that you are made unhappy—if noters and protestors are the sort of wretches whose astrological shadows darken the house of life—then note you what I vehemently protest—viz., that no matter though the sheriff and under-sheriff in every county should be running after you with his *posse*, touch a hair of your head he cannot whilst you keep house, and have your legal domicile on the box of the mail. It is felony to stop the mail; even the sheriff cannot do that. And an *extra* touch of the whip to the leaders (no great matter if it grazes the sheriff) at any time guarantees your safety." In fact, a bedroom in a quiet house seems a safe enough retreat, yet it is liable to its own notorious nuisances—to robbers by night, to rats, to fire. But the mail laughs at these terrors. To robbers, the answer is packed up and ready for delivery in the barrel of the guard's blunderbuss. Rats again!—there *are* none about mail-coaches, any more than snakes in Von Troil's Iceland; * except, indeed, now and then a parliament rat, who always hides his shame in what I have shown to be the "coal-cellar." And as to fire, I never knew but one in a mail-coach, which was in the Exeter mail, and caused by an obstinate sailor bound to Devonport. Jack, making light of the law and the law-giver that had set their faces against his offence, insisted on taking up a forbidden seat † in the rear of the roof, from

* "*Von Troil's Iceland*":—The allusion is to a well-known chapter in Von Troil's work entitled, "Concerning the Snakes of Iceland." The entire chapter consists of these six words—"There are no snakes in Iceland."

† "*Forbidden seat*":—The very sternest code of rules was enforced upon the mails by the Post-office. Throughout England, only three outsides were allowed, of whom one was to sit on the

which he could exchange his own yarns with those of the guard. No greater offence was then known to mail-coaches ; it was treason, it was *læsa majestas*, it was by tendency arson ; and the ashes of Jack's pipe, falling amongst the straw of the hinder boot containing the mail-bags, raised a flame which (aided by the wind of our motion) threatened a revolution in the republic of letters. Yet even this left the sanctity of the box unviolated. In dignified repose, the coachman and myself sat on, resting with benign composure upon our knowledge that the fire would have to burn its way through four inside passengers before it could reach ourselves. I remarked to the coachman, with a quotation from Virgil's "*Æneid*" really too hackneyed—

"Jam proximus ardet
Ucalegon."

But, recollecting that the Virgilian part of the coachman's education might have been neglected, I interpreted so far as to say, that perhaps at that moment the flames were catching hold of our worthy brother and inside passenger, Ucalegon. The coachman made no answer, which is my own way when a stranger addresses me either in Syriac or in Coptic, but by his faint sceptical smile he seemed to insinuate that he knew better ; for that Ucalegon, as it happened, was not in the way-bill, and therefore could not have been booked.

No dignity is perfect which does not at some point ally itself with the mysterious. The connection of the mail with the state and the executive government—a connection obvious, but yet not strictly defined—gave to the whole

box, and the other two immediately behind the box ; none, under any pretext, to come near the guard ; an indispensable caution ; since else, under the guise of passenger, a robber might by any one of a thousand advantages—which sometimes are created, but always are favoured, by the animation of frank social intercourse—have disarmed the guard. Beyond the Scottish border, the regulation was so far relaxed as to allow of *four* outsiders, but not relaxed at all as to the mode of placing them. One, as before, was seated on the box, and the other three on the front of the roof, with a determinate and ample separation from the little insulated chair of the guard. This relaxation was conceded by way of compensating to Scotland her disadvantages in point of population. England, by the superior density of her population, might always count upon a large fund of profits in the fractional trips of chance passengers riding for short distances of two or three stages. In Scotland, this chance counted for much less. And therefore, to make good the deficiency, Scotland was allowed a compensatory profit upon one *extra* passenger.

mail establishment an official grandeur which did us service on the roads, and invested us with seasonable terrors. Not the less impressive were those terrors, because their legal limits were imperfectly ascertained. Look at those turnpike gates; with what deferential hurry, with what an obedient start, they fly open at our approach! Look at that long line of carts and carters ahead, audaciously usurping the very crest of the road. Ah! traitors, they do not hear us as yet; but, as soon as the dreadful blast of our horn reaches them with proclamation of our approach, see with what frenzy of trepidation they fly to their horses' heads, and deprecate our wrath by the precipitation of their crane-neck quarterings. Treason they feel to be their crime; each individual carter feels himself under the ban of confiscation and attainder; his blood is attainted through six generations; and nothing is wanting but the headsman and his axe, the block and the saw-dust, to close up the vista of his horrors. What! shall it be within benefit of clergy to delay the king's message on the high road?—to interrupt the great respirations, ebb and flood, *systole* and *diastole*, of the national intercourse?—to endanger the safety of tidings, running day and night between all nations and languages? Or can it be fancied, amongst the weakest of men, that the bodies of the criminals will be given up to their widows for Christian burial? Now the doubts which were raised as to our powers did more to wrap them in terror, by wrapping them in uncertainty, than could have been effected by the sharpest definitions of the law from the Quarter Sessions. We, on our parts (we, the collective mail, I mean), did our utmost to exalt the idea of our privileges by the insolence with which we wielded them. Whether this insolence rested upon law that gave it a sanction, or upon conscious power that haughtily dispensed with that sanction, equally it spoke from a potential station; and the agent, in each particular insolence of the moment, was viewed reverentially, as one having authority.

Sometimes after breakfast his majesty's mail would become frisky; and in its difficult wheelings amongst the intricacies of early markets, it would upset an apple-cart, a cart loaded with eggs, etc. Huge was the affliction and dismay, awful was the smash. I, as far as possible, endeavoured in such a case to represent the conscience and moral sensibilities of the mail; and, when wildernesses of eggs were lying poached under our horses' hoofs, then

would I stretch forth my hands in sorrow, saying (in words too celebrated at that time, from the false echoes * of Marengo), "Ah! wherefore have we not time to weep over you?" which was evidently impossible, since, in fact, we had not time to laugh over them. Tied to Post-office allowance, in some cases of fifty minutes for eleven miles, could the royal mail pretend to undertake the offices of sympathy and condolence? Could it be expected to provide tears for the accidents of the road? If even it seemed to trample on humanity, it did so, I felt, in discharge of its own more peremptory duties.

Upholding the morality of the mail, *à fortiori* I upheld its rights; as a matter of duty, I stretched to the uttermost its privilege of imperial precedency, and astonished weak minds by the feudal powers which I hinted to be lurking constructively in the charters of this proud establishment. Once I remember being on the box of the Holyhead mail, between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, when a tawdry thing from Birmingham, some "Tallyho" or "Highflyer," all flaunting with green and gold, came up alongside of us. What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and colour in this plebeian wretch! The single ornament on our dark ground of chocolate colour was the mighty shield of the imperial arms, but emblazoned in proportions as modest as a signet-ring bears to a seal of office. Even this was displayed only on a single panel, whispering, rather than proclaiming, our relations to the mighty state; whilst the beast from Birmingham, our green-and-gold friend from false, fleeting, perjured Brummagem, had as much writing and painting on its sprawling flanks as would have puzzled a decipherer from the tombs of Luxor. For some time this Birmingham machine ran along by our side—a piece of familiarity that already of itself seemed to me sufficiently jacobinical. But all at once a movement of the horses announced a desperate intention of leaving us behind. "Do you see *that*?" I said to the coachman.—"I see," was his short answer. He was wide awake, yet he waited longer than seemed prudent; for the horses of our audacious opponent had a disagreeable air of freshness and

* "*False echoes*":—Yes, false! for the words ascribed to Napoleon, as breathed to the memory of Desaix, never were uttered at all. They stand in the same category of theatrical fictions as the cry of the foundering line-of-battleship Vengeur, as the vaunt of General Cambronne at Waterloo, "*La Garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas*," or as the repartees of Talleyrand.

power. But his motive was loyal ; his wish was, that the Birmingham conceit should be full-blown before he froze it. When *that* seemed right, he unloosed, or, to speak by a stronger word, he *sprang*, his known resources : he slipped our royal horses like cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, after the affrighted game. How they could retain such a reserve of fiery power after the work they had accomplished, seemed hard to explain. But on our side, besides the physical superiority, was a tower of moral strength, namely, the king's name, "which they upon the adverse faction wanted." Passing them without an effort, as it seemed, we threw them into the rear with so lengthening an interval between us, as proved in itself the bitterest mockery of their presumption ; whilst our guard blew back a shattering blast of triumph, that was really too painfully full of derision.

I mention this little incident for its connection with what followed. A Welsh rustic, sitting behind me, asked if I had not felt my heart burn within me during the progress of the race ? I said, with philosophic calmness, *No* ; because we were not racing with a mail, so that no glory could be gained. In fact, it was sufficiently mortifying that such a Birmingham thing should dare to challenge us. The Welshman replied, that he didn't see *that* ; for that a cat might look at a king, and a Brummagem coach might lawfully race the Holyhead mail. "*Race us, if you like,*" I replied, "though even *that* has an air of sedition, but not *beat* us. This would have been treason ; and for its own sake I am glad that the 'Tallyho' was disappointed." So dissatisfied did the Welshman seem with this opinion, that at last I was obliged to tell him a very fine story from one of our elder dramatists—viz., that once, in some far oriental kingdom, when the sultan of all the land, with his princes, ladies, and chief omrahs, were flying their falcons, a hawk suddenly flew at a majestic eagle ; and in defiance of the eagle's natural advantages, in contempt also of the eagle's traditional royalty, and before the whole assembled field of astonished spectators from Agra and Lahore, killed the eagle on the spot. Amazement seized the sultan at the unequal contest, and burning admiration for its unparalleled result. He commanded that the hawk should be brought before him ; he caressed the bird with enthusiasm ; and he ordered that, for the commemoration of his matchless courage, a diadem of gold and rubies should be solemnly placed on the hawk's head ; but then that, immediately

after this solemn coronation, the bird should be led off to execution, as the most valiant indeed of traitors, but not the less a traitor, as having dared to rise rebelliously against his liege lord and anointed sovereign, the eagle. "Now," said I to the Welshman, "to you and me, as men of refined sensibilities, how painful it would have been that this poor Brummagem brute, the 'Tallyho,' in the impossible case of a victory over us, should have been crowned with Birmingham tinsel, with paste diamonds, and Roman pearls, and then led off to instant execution." The Welshman doubted if that could be warranted by law. And when I hinted at the 6th of Edward Longshanks, chap. 18, for regulating the precedency of coaches, as being probably the statute relied on for capital punishment of such offences, he replied drily, that if the attempt to pass a mail really were treasonable, it was a pity that the "Tallyho" appeared to have so imperfect an acquaintance with law.

The modern modes of travelling cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon *alien* evidence; as, for instance, because somebody *says* that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience, or upon the evidence of a result, as that actually we find ourselves in York four hours after leaving London. Apart from such an assertion, or such a result, I myself am little aware of the pace. But, seated on the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity. On this system the word was, *Non magna loquimur*, as upon railways, but *vivimus*. Yes "*magna vivimus*"; we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realise our grandeurs in act, and in the very experience of life. The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubts impossible on the question of our speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed was not the product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first. But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and

its electric thrillings—kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. Nile nor Trafalgar has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up for ever; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse; the inter-agencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight solitudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking, when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot-walloping of the boiler.

Thus have perished multiform openings for public expressions of interest, scenical yet natural, in great national tidings; for revelations of faces and groups that could not offer themselves amongst the fluctuating mobs of a railway station. The gatherings of gazers about a laurelled mail had one centre, and acknowledged one sole interest. But the crowds attending at a railway station have as little unity as running water, and own as many centres as there are separate carriages in the train.

How else, for example, than as a constant watcher for the dawn, and for the London mail that in summer months entered about daybreak amongst the lawny thickets of Marlborough forest, couldst thou, sweet Fanny of the Bath road, have become the glorified inmate of my dreams? Yet Fanny, as the loveliest young woman for face and person that perhaps in my whole life I have beheld, merited the station which even now, from a distance of forty years, she holds in my dreams; yes, though by links of natural association she brings along with her a troop of dreadful creatures, fabulous and not fabulous, that are more abominable to the heart, than Fanny and the dawn are delightful.

Miss Fanny of the Bath road, strictly speaking, lived at a mile's distance from that road; but came so continually

to meet the mail, that I on my frequent transits rarely missed her, and naturally connected her image with the great thoroughfare where only I had ever seen her. Why she came so punctually, I do not exactly know; but I believe with some burden of commissions to be executed in Bath, which had gathered to her own residence as a central rendezvous for converging them. The mail-coachman who drove the Bath mail, and wore the royal livery,* happened to be Fanny's grandfather. A good man he was, that loved his beautiful granddaughter; and, loving her wisely, was vigilant over her deportment in any case where young Oxford might happen to be concerned. Did my vanity then suggest that I myself, individually, could fall within the line of his terrors? Certainly not, as regarded any physical pretensions that I could plead; for Fanny (as a chance passenger from her own neighbourhood once told me) counted in her train a hundred and ninety-nine professed admirers, if not open aspirants to her favour; and probably not one of the whole brigade but excelled myself in personal advantages. Ulysses even, with the unfair advantage of his accursed bow, could hardly have undertaken that amount of suitors. So the danger might have seemed slight—only that woman is universally aristocratic; it is amongst her nobilities of heart that she is so. Now, the aristocratic distinctions in my favour might easily with Miss Fanny have compensated my physical deficiencies. Did I then make love to Fanny? Why, yes; about as much love as one *could* make whilst the mail was changing horses—a process which, ten years later, did not occupy above eighty seconds; but *then*—viz., about Waterloo—it occupied five times eighty. Now, four hundred seconds offer a field quite ample enough for whispering into a young woman's ear a great deal of truth, and (by way of parenthesis) some trifle of falsehood. Grandpapa did right, therefore, to watch me. And yet, as happens too often to the grandpapas of earth, in a contest with the admirers of

* "*Wore the royal livery*":—The general impression was, that the royal livery belonged of right to the mail-coachmen as their professional dress. But that was an error. To the guard it *did* belong, I believe, and was obviously essential as an official warrant, and as a means of instant identification for his person, in the discharge of his important public duties. But the coachman, and especially if his place in the series did not connect him immediately with London and the General Post-office, obtained the scarlet coat only as an honorary distinction after long (or, if not long, trying and special) service.

granddaughters, how vainly would he have watched me had I meditated any evil whispers to Fanny ! She, it is my belief, would have protected herself against any man's evil suggestions. But he, as the result showed, could not have intercepted the opportunities for such suggestions. Yet, why not ? Was he not active ? Was he not blooming ? Blooming he was as Fanny herself.

“ Say, all our praises why should lords——”

Stop, that's not the line.

“ Say, all our roses why should girls engross ? ”

The coachman showed rosy blossoms on his face deeper even than his granddaughter's—*his* being drawn from the ale cask, Fanny's from the fountains of the dawn. But, in spite of his blooming face, some infirmities he had ; and one particularly in which he too much resembled a crocodile. This lay in a monstrous inaptitude for turning round. The crocodile, I presume, owes that inaptitude to the absurd *length* of his back ; but in our grandpapa it arose rather from the absurd *breadth* of his back, combined, possibly, with some growing stiffness in his legs. Now, upon this crocodile infirmity of his I planted a human advantage for tendering my homage to Miss Fanny. In defiance of all his honourable vigilance, no sooner had he presented to us his mighty Jovian back (what a field for displaying to mankind his royal scarlet !), whilst inspecting professionally the buckles, the straps, and the silvery turrets * of his harness, than I raised Miss Fanny's hand to my lips, and, by the mixed tenderness and respectfulness of my manner, caused her easily to understand how happy it would make me to rank upon her list as No. 10 or 12, in which case a few casualties amongst her lovers (and observe, they *hanged* liberally in those days) might have promoted me speedily to the top of the tree ; as, on the other hand, with how much loyalty of submission I acquiesced by anticipation in her award, supposing that she should plant me in the very rear-ward of

* “ *Turrets* ” :—As one who loves and venerates Chaucer for his unrivalled merits of tenderness, of picturesque characterisation, and of narrative skill, I noticed with great pleasure that the word *torrettes* is used by him to designate the little devices through which the reins are made to pass. This same word, in the same exact sense, I heard uniformly used by many scores of illustrious mail-coachmen, to whose confidential friendship I had the honour of being admitted in my younger days.

her favour, as No. 199 + 1. Most truly I loved this beautiful and ingenuous girl; and had it not been for the Bath mail, timing all courtships by post-office allowance, heaven only knows what might have come of it. People talk of being over head and ears in love; now, the mail was the cause that I sank only over ears in love, which, you know, still left a trifle of brain to overlook the whole conduct of the affair.

Ah, reader! when I look back upon these days, it seems to me that all things change—all things perish. “Perish the roses and palms of kings”: perish even the crowns and trophies of Waterloo: thunder and lightnings are not the thunder and lightning which I remember. Roses are degenerating. The Fannies of our island—though this I say with reluctance—are not visibly improving; and the Bath road is notoriously superannuated. Crocodiles, you will say, are stationary. Mr. Waterton tells me that the crocodile does *not* change; that a cayman, in fact, or an alligator, is just as good for riding upon as he was in the time of the Pharaohs. *That* may be; but the reason is, that the crocodile does not live fast—he is a slow coach. I believe it is generally understood amongst naturalists, that the crocodile is a blockhead. It is my own impression that the Pharaohs were also blockheads. Now, as the Pharaohs and the crocodile domineered over Egyptian society, this accounts for a singular mistake that prevailed through innumerable generations on the Nile. The crocodile made the ridiculous blunder of supposing man to be meant chiefly for his own eating. Man, taking a different view of the subject, naturally met that mistake by another: he viewed the crocodile as a thing sometimes to worship, but always to run away from. And this continued until Mr. Waterton * changed the relations between the animals. The mode of escaping from the reptile he showed to be, not by running away, but by leaping on its back, booted

* “*Mr. Waterton*”:—Had the reader lived through the last generation, he would not need to be told that some thirty or thirty-five years back, Mr. Waterton, a distinguished country gentleman of ancient family in Northumberland, publicly mounted and rode in top-boots a savage old crocodile, that was restive and very impertinent, but all to no purpose. The crocodile jibbed and tried to kick, but vainly. He was no more able to throw the squire, than Sinbad was to throw the old scoundrel who used his back without paying for it, until he discovered a mode (slightly immoral, perhaps, though some think not) of murdering the old fraudulent jockey, and so circuitously of unhorsing him.

and spurred. The two animals had misunderstood each other. The use of the crocodile has now been cleared up—viz., to be ridden; and the final cause of man is, that he may improve the health of the crocodile by riding him a fox-hunting before breakfast. And it is pretty certain that any crocodile, who has been regularly hunted through the season and is master of the weight he carries, will take a six-barred gate now as well as ever he would have done in the infancy of the pyramids.

If, therefore, the crocodile does *not* change, all things else undeniably *do*: even the shadow of the pyramids grows less. And often the restoration in vision of Fanny and the Bath road, makes me too pathetically sensible of that truth. Out of the darkness, if I happen to call back the image of Fanny, up rises suddenly from a gulf of forty years a rose in June; or, if I think for an instant of the rose in June, up rises the heavenly face of Fanny. One after the other, like the antiphonies in the choral service, rise Fanny and the rose in June, then back again the rose in June and Fanny. Then come both together, as in a chorus—roses and Fannies, Fannies and roses, without end, thick as blossoms in paradise. Then comes a venerable crocodile, in a royal livery of scarlet and gold, with sixteen capes; and the crocodile is driving four-in-hand from the box of the Bath mail. And suddenly we upon the mail are pulled up by a mighty dial, sculptured with the hours, that mingle with the heavens and the heavenly host. Then all at once we are arrived at Marlborough forest, amongst the lovely households* of the roe-deer; the deer and their fawns retire into the dewy thickets; the thickets are rich with roses; once again the roses call up the sweet countenance of Fanny; and she, being the granddaughter of a crocodile, awakens a dreadful host of semi-legendary animals—griffins, dragons, basilisks, sphinxes—till at length the whole vision of fighting images crowds into one towering armorial shield, a vast emblazonry of human charities and human loveliness that have perished, but quartered heraldically with unutterable and demoniac natures, whilst over all rises, as a surmounting crest,

* "*Households*":—Roe-deer do not congregate in herds like the fallow or the red deer, but by separate families, parents and children; which feature of approximation to the sanctity of human hearths, added to their comparatively miniature and graceful proportions, conciliate to them an interest of peculiar tenderness, supposing even that this beautiful creature is less characteristically impressed with the grandeurs of savage and forest life.

one fair female hand, with the forefinger pointing, in sweet, sorrowful admonition, upwards to heaven, where is sculptured the eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth and her children.

GOING DOWN WITH VICTORY

But the grandest chapter of our experience, within the whole mail-coach service, was on those occasions when we went down from London with the news of victory. A period of about ten years stretched from Trafalgar to Waterloo; the second and third years of which period (1806 and 1807) were comparatively sterile; but the other nine (from 1805 to 1815 inclusively) furnished a long succession of victories; the least of which, in such a contest of Titans, had an inappreciable value of position—partly for its absolute interference with the plans of our enemy, but still more from its keeping alive through central Europe the sense of a deep-seated vulnerability in France. Even to tease the coasts of our enemy, to mortify them by continual blockades, to insult them by capturing if it were but a baubling schooner under the eyes of their arrogant armies, repeated from time to time a sullen proclamation of power lodged in one quarter to which the hopes of Christendom turned in secret. How much more loudly must this proclamation have spoken in the audacity* of having bearded the *élite* of their troops, and having beaten them in pitched battles! Five years of life it was worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place on a mail-coach, when carrying down the first tidings of any such event. And it is to be noted that, from our insular situation, and the multitude of our frigates disposable for the rapid transmission of intelligence, rarely did any un-

* "*Audacity*":—Such the French accounted it; and it has struck me that Soult would not have been so popular in London, at the period of her present Majesty's coronation, or in Manchester, on occasion of his visit to that town, if they had been aware of the insolence with which he spoke of us in notes written at intervals from the field of Waterloo. As though it had been mere felony in our army to look a French one in the face, he said in more notes than one, dated from two to four P.M. on the field of Waterloo, "Here are the English—we have them; they are caught *en flagrant délit*." Yet no man should have known us better; no man had drunk deeper from the cup of humiliation than Soult had in 1809, when ejected by us with headlong violence from Oporto, and pursued through a long line of wrecks to the frontier of Spain; subsequently at Albuera, in the bloodiest of recorded battles, to say nothing of Toulouse, he should have learned our pretensions.

authorised rumour steal away a prelibation from the first aroma of the regular despatches. The government news was generally the earliest news.

From eight P.M., to fifteen or twenty minutes later, imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street, where, at that time,* and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post-office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember; but, from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity—but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses—were what might have fixed the attention. Every carriage, on every morning in the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination—wheels, axles, linchpins, pole, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much rigour as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. But the night before us is a night of victory; and, behold! to the ordinary display, what a heart-shaking addition!—horses, men, carriages, all are dressed in laurels and flowers, oak-leaves and ribbons. The guards, as being officially his Majesty's servants, and of the coachmen such as are within the privilege of the post-office, wear the royal liveries of course; and as it is summer (for all the *land* victories were naturally won in summer), they wear, on this fine evening, these liveries exposed to view, without any covering of upper-coats. Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of the laurels in their hats, dilate their hearts, by giving to them openly a personal connection with the great news, in which already they have the general interest of patriotism. That great national sentiment surmounts and quells all sense of ordinary distinctions. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now hardly to be distinguished as such except by dress; for the usual reserve of their manner in speaking to the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one glory, connects every man by the transcendant bond of his national blood. The spectators, who are numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by con-

* "*At that time*":—I speak of the era previous to Waterloo.

tinual hurrahs. Every moment are shouted aloud by the post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years—Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen—expressing the grandeur of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir!—what sea-like ferment!—what a thundering of wheels!—what a trampling of hoofs!—what a sounding of trumpets!—what farewell cheers—what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation, connecting the name of the particular mail—“Liverpool for ever!”—with the name of the particular victory—“Badajoz for ever!” or “Salamanca for ever!” The half-slumbering consciousness that, all night long and all the next day—perhaps for even a longer period—many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gunpowder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy, has an obscure effect of multiplying the victory itself, by multiplying to the imagination into infinity the stages of its progressive diffusion. A fiery arrow seems to be let loose, which from that moment is destined to travel, without intermission, westwards for three hundred * miles—northwards for six hundred; and

* “*Three hundred*”:—Of necessity, this scale of measurement, to an American, if he happens to be a thoughtless man, must sound ludicrous. Accordingly, I remember a case in which an American writer indulges himself in the luxury of a little fibbing, by ascribing to an Englishman a pompous account of the Thames, constructed entirely upon American ideas of grandeur, and concluding in something like these terms:—“And, sir, arriving at London, this mighty father of rivers attains a breadth of at least two furlongs, having, in its winding course, traversed the astonishing distance of one hundred and seventy miles.” And this the candid American thinks it fair to contrast with the scale of the Mississippi. Now, it is hardly worth while to answer a pure fiction gravely, else one might say that no Englishman out of Bedlam ever thought of looking in an island for the rivers of a continent; nor, consequently, could have thought of looking for the peculiar grandeur of the Thames in the length of its course, or in the extent of soil which it drains; yet, if he *had* been so absurd, the American might have recollected that a river, not to be compared with the Thames even

the sympathy of our Lombard Street friends at parting is exalted a hundredfold by a sort of visionary sympathy with the yet slumbering sympathies which in so vast a succession we are going to awake.

Liberated from the embarrassments of the city, and issuing into the broad uncrowded avenues of the northern suburbs, we soon begin to enter upon our natural pace of ten miles an hour. In the broad light of the summer evening, the sun, perhaps, only just at the point of setting, we are seen from every storey of every house. Heads of every age crowd to the windows—young and old understand the language of our victorious symbols—and rolling volleys of sympathising cheers run along us, behind us, and before us. The beggar, rearing himself against the wall, forgets his lameness—real or assumed—thinks not of his whining trade, but stands erect, with bold exulting smiles, as we pass him. The victory has healed him, and says, Be thou whole ! Women and children, from garrets alike and cellars, through infinite London, look down or look up with loving eyes upon our gay ribbons and our martial laurels ; sometimes kiss their hands ; sometimes hang out, as signals of affection, pocket-handkerchiefs, aprons, dusters, anything that, by catching the summer breezes, will express an aerial jubilation. On the London side of Barnet, to which we draw near within a few minutes after nine, observe that private carriage which is approaching us. The weather being so warm, the glasses are all down ; and one may read, as on the stage of a theatre, everything that goes on within. It contains three ladies—one likely to be “mamma,” and two of seventeen or eighteen, who are probably her daughters. What lovely animation, what beautiful

as to volume of water—viz., the Tiber—has contrived to make itself heard of in this world for twenty-five centuries to an extent not reached as yet by any river, however corpulent, of his own land. The glory of the Thames is measured by the destiny of the population to which it ministers, by the commerce which it supports, by the grandeur of the empire in which, though far from the largest, it is the most influential stream. Upon some such scale, and not by a transfer of Columbian standards, is the course of our English mails to be valued. The American may fancy the effect of his own valuations to our English ears, by supposing the case of a Siberian glorifying his country in these terms:—“These wretches, sir, in France and England, cannot march half a mile in any direction without finding a house where food can be had and lodging ; whereas, such is the noble desolation of our magnificent country, that in many a direction for a thousand miles, I will engage that a dog shall not find shelter from a snow-storm, nor a wren find an apology for breakfast.”

unpremeditated pantomime, explaining to us every syllable that passes, in these ingenuous girls! By the sudden start and raising of the hands, on first discovering our laurelled equipage!—by the sudden movement and appeal to the elder lady from both of them—and by the heightened colour on their animated countenances, we can almost hear them saying, “See, see! Look at their laurels! Oh, mamma! there has been a great battle in Spain; and it has been a great victory.” In a moment we are on the point of passing them. We passengers—I on the box, and the two on the roof behind me—raise our hats to the ladies; the coachman makes his professional salute with the whip; the guard even, though punctilious on the matter of his dignity as an officer under the crown, touches his hat. The ladies move to us, in return, with a winning graciousness of gesture; all smile on each side in a way that nobody could misunderstand, and that nothing short of a grand national sympathy could so instantaneously prompt. Will these ladies say that we are nothing to *them*? Oh, no; they will not say *that*. They cannot deny—they do not deny—that for this night they are our sisters; gentle or simple, scholar or illiterate servant, for twelve hours to come, we on the outside have the honour to be their brothers. Those poor women, again, who stop to gaze upon us with delight at the entrance of Barnet, and seem, by their air of weariness, to be returning from labour—do you mean to say that they are washerwomen and charwomen? Oh, my poor friend, you are quite mistaken. I assure you they stand in a far higher rank; for this one night they feel themselves by birth-right to be daughters of England, and answer to no humbler title.

Every joy, however, even rapturous joy—such is the sad law of earth—may carry with it grief, or fear of grief, to some. Three miles beyond Barnet, we see approaching us another private carriage, nearly repeating the circumstances of the former case. Here, also, the glasses are all down—here, also, is an elderly lady seated; but the two daughters are missing; for the single young person sitting by the lady’s side, seems to be an attendant—so I judge from her dress, and her air of respectful reserve. The lady is in mourning; and her countenance expresses sorrow. At first she does not look up; so that I believe she is not aware of our approach, until she hears the measured beating of our horses’ hoofs. Then she raises her eyes to settle them painfully on our triumphal equipage. Our decora-

tions explain the case to her at once ; but she beholds them with apparent anxiety, or even with terror. Some time before this, I, finding it difficult to hit a flying mark, when embarrassed by the coachman's person and reins intervening, had given to the guard a " Courier " evening paper, containing the gazette, for the next carriage that might pass. Accordingly he tossed it in, so folded that the huge capitals expressing some such legend as—GLORIOUS VICTORY, might catch the eye at once. To see the paper, however, at all, interpreted as it was by our ensigns of triumph, explained everything ; and, if the guard were right in thinking the lady to have received it with a gesture of horror, it could not be doubtful that she had suffered some deep personal affliction in connection with this Spanish war.

Here, now, was the case of one who, having formerly suffered, might, erroneously perhaps, be distressing herself with anticipations of another similar suffering. That same night, and hardly three hours later, occurred the reverse case. A poor woman, who too probably would find herself, in a day or two, to have suffered the heaviest of afflictions by the battle, blindly allowed herself to express an exultation so unmeasured in the news and its details, as gave to her the appearance which amongst Celtic-Highlanders is called *fey*. This was at some little town where we changed horses an hour or two after midnight. Some fair or wake had kept the people up out of their beds, and had occasioned a partial illumination of the stalls and booths, presenting an unusual but very impressive effect. We saw many lights moving about as we drew near ; and perhaps the most striking scene on the whole route was our reception at this place. The flashing of torches and the beautiful radiance of blue lights (technically, Bengal lights) upon the heads of our horses ; the fine effect of such a showery and ghostly illumination falling upon our flowers and glittering laurels ; * whilst all around ourselves, that formed a centre of light, the darkness gathered on the rear and flanks in massy blackness ; these optical splendours, together with the prodigious enthusiasm of the people, composed a picture at once scenical and affecting, theatrical and holy. As we staid for three or four minutes, I alighted ; and immediately from a dismantled stall in the street, where no doubt she had been presiding through the

* "*Glittering laurels* " :—I must observe, that the colour of *green* suffers almost a spiritual change and exaltation under the effect of Bengal lights.

earlier part of the night, advanced eagerly a middle-aged woman. The sight of my newspaper it was that had drawn her attention upon myself. The victory which we were carrying down to the provinces on *this* occasion, was the imperfect one of Talavera—imperfect for its results, such was the virtual treachery of the Spanish general, Cuesta, but not imperfect in its ever-memorable heroism. I told her the main outline of the battle. The agitation of her enthusiasm had been so conspicuous when listening, and when first applying for information, that I could not but ask her if she had not some relative in the Pensinular army. Oh, yes; her only son was there. In what regiment? He was a trooper in the 23d Dragoons. My heart sank within me as she made that answer. This sublime regiment, which an Englishman should never mention without raising his hat to their memory, had made the most memorable and effective charge recorded in military annals. They leaped their horses—*over* a trench where they could, *into* it, and with the result of death or mutilation when they could *not*. What proportion cleared the trench is nowhere stated. Those who *did*, closed up and went down upon the enemy with such divinity of fervour (I use the word *divinity* by design: the inspiration of God must have prompted this movement to those whom even then he was calling to his presence), that two results followed. As regarded the enemy, this 23d Dragoons, not, I believe, originally three hundred and fifty strong, paralysed a French column, six thousand strong, then ascended the hill, and fixed the gaze of the whole French army. As regarded themselves, the 23d were supposed at first to have been barely not annihilated; but eventually, I believe, about one in four survived. And this, then, was the regiment—a regiment already for some hours glorified and hallowed to the ear of all London, as lying stretched, by a large majority, upon one bloody aceldama—in which the young trooper served whose mother was now talking in a spirit of such joyous enthusiasm. Did I tell her the truth? Had I the heart to break up her dreams? No. To-morrow, said I to myself—to-morrow, or the next day, will publish the worst. For one night more, wherefore should she not sleep in peace? After to-morrow, the chances are too many that peace will forsake her pillow. This brief respite, then, let her owe to *my* gift and *my* forbearance. But, if I told her not of the bloody price that had been paid, not, therefore, was I silent on the contributions from her son's regiment to that day's

service and glory. I showed her not the funeral banners under which the noble regiment was sleeping. I lifted not the overshadowing laurels from the bloody trench in which horse and rider lay mangled together. But I told her how these dear children of England, officers and privates, had leaped their horses over all obstacles as gaily as hunters to the morning's chase. I told her how they rode their horses into the mists of death (saying to myself, but not saying to *her*), and laid down their young lives for thee, O mother England! as willingly—poured out their noble blood as cheerfully—as ever, after a long day's sport, when infants, they had rested their wearied heads upon their mother's knees, or had sunk to sleep in her arms. Strange it is, yet true, that she seemed to have no fears for her son's safety, even after this knowledge that the 23d Dragoons had been memorably engaged; but so much was she enraptured by the knowledge that *his* regiment, and therefore that *he*, had rendered conspicuous service in the dreadful conflict—a service which had actually made them, within the last twelve hours, the foremost topic of conversation in London—so absolutely was fear swallowed up in joy—that, in the mere simplicity of her fervent nature, the poor woman threw her arms round my neck, as she thought of her son, and gave to *me* the kiss which secretly was meant for *him*.

SECTION THE SECOND

THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH

WHAT is to be taken as the predominant opinion of man, reflective and philosophic, upon SUDDEN DEATH? It is remarkable that, in different conditions of society, sudden death has been variously regarded as the consummation of an earthly career most fervently to be desired, or, again, as that consummation which is with most horror to be deprecated. Cæsar the Dictator, at his last dinner party (*cæna*), on the very evening before his assassination, when the minutes of his earthly career were numbered, being asked what death, in *his* judgment, might be pronounced the most eligible, replied, "That which should be most sudden." On the other hand, the divine Litany, of our English Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, places such a death in the very van of horrors:—"From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from SUDDEN DEATH—*Good Lord, deliver us.*" Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities; it is ranked among the last of curses, and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it was ranked as the first of blessings. In that difference, most readers will see little more than the essential difference between Christianity and Paganism. But this, on consideration, I doubt. The Christian Church may be right in its estimate of sudden death; and it is a natural feeling, though after all it may also be an infirm one, to wish for a quiet dismissal from life—as that which *seems* most reconcilable with meditation, with penitential retrospects, and with the humilities of farewell prayer. There does not, however, occur to me any direct scriptural warrant for this earnest petition of the English Litany, unless under a special construction of the word "sudden." It seems a petition—indulged rather and conceded to human infirmity, than exacted from human piety. It is not so much a doctrine built upon the eternities of the

Christian system, as a plausible opinion built upon special varieties of human temperament. Let that, however, be as it may, two remarks suggest themselves as prudent restraints upon a doctrine, which else *may* wander, and *has* wandered, into an uncharitable superstition. The first is this: that many people are likely to exaggerate the horror of a sudden death, from the disposition to lay a false stress upon words or acts, simply because by an accident they have become *final* words or acts. If a man dies, for instance, by some sudden death when he happens to be intoxicated, such a death is falsely regarded with peculiar horror; as though the intoxication were suddenly exalted into a blasphemy. But *that* is unphilosophic. The man was, or he was not, *habitually* a drunkard. If not, if his intoxication were a solitary accident, there can be no reason for allowing special emphasis to this act, simply because through misfortune it became his final act. Nor, on the other hand, if it were no accident, but one of his *habitual* transgressions, will it be the more habitual, or the more a transgression, because some sudden calamity, surprising him, has caused this habitual transgression to be also a final one? Could this man have had any reason even dimly to foresee his own sudden death, there would have been a new feature in his act of intemperance—a feature of presumption and irreverence, as in one that, having known himself drawing near to the presence of God, should have suited his demeanour to an expectation so awful. But this is no part of the case supposed. And the only new element in the man's act is not any element of special immorality, but simply of special misfortune.

The other remark has reference to the meaning of the word *sudden*. Very possibly Cæsar and the Christian Church do not differ in the way supposed; that is, do not differ by any difference of doctrine as between Pagan and Christian views of the moral temper appropriate to death, but perhaps they are contemplating different cases. Both contemplate a violent death, a *Biaθavatos*—death that is *Biaios* or, in other words, death that is brought about, not by internal and spontaneous change, but by active force having its origin from without. In this meaning the two authorities agree. Thus far they are in harmony. But the difference is, that the Roman by the word “sudden” means *unlingering*; whereas the Christian Litany by “sudden death” means a death *without warning*, consequently without any available summons to religious prepara-

tion. The poor mutineer, who kneels down to gather into his heart the bullets from twelve firelocks of his pitying comrades, dies by a most sudden death in Cæsar's sense ; one shock, one mighty spasm, one (possibly *not* one) groan, and all is over. But, in the sense of the Litany, the mutineer's death is far from sudden ; his offence originally, his imprisonment, his trial, the interval between his sentence and its execution, having all furnished him with separate warnings of his fate—having all summoned him to meet it with solemn preparation.

Here at once, in this sharp verbal distinction, we comprehend the faithful earnestness with which a holy Christian Church pleads on behalf of her poor departing children, that God would vouchsafe to them the last great privilege and distinction possible on a death-bed—viz., the opportunity of untroubled preparation for facing this mighty trial. Sudden death, as a mere variety in the modes of dying, where death in some shape is inevitable, proposes a question of choice which, equally in the Roman and the Christian sense, will be variously answered according to each man's variety of temperament. Meantime, one aspect of sudden death there is, one modification, upon which no doubt can arise, that of all martyrdoms it is the most agitating—viz., where it surprises a man under circumstances which offer (or which seem to offer) some hurrying, flying, inappreciably minute chance of evading it. Sudden as the danger which it affronts, must be any effort by which such an evasion can be accomplished. Even *that*, even the sickening necessity for hurrying in extremity where all hurry seems destined to be vain, even that anguish is liable to a hideous exasperation in one particular case—viz., where the appeal is made not exclusively to the instinct of self-preservation, but to the conscience, on behalf of some other life besides your own, accidentally thrown upon *your* protection. To fail, to collapse in a service merely your own, might seem comparatively venial ; though, in fact, it is far from venial. But to fail in a case where Providence has suddenly thrown into your hands the final interests of another—a fellow-creature shuddering between the gates of life and death ; this, to a man of apprehensive conscience, would mingle the misery of an atrocious criminality with the misery of a bloody calamity. You are called upon, by the case supposed, possibly to die ; but to die at the very moment when, by any even partial failure, or effeminate collapse of your

energies, you will be self-denounced as a murderer. You had but the twinkling of an eye for your effort, and that effort might have been unavailing; but to have risen to the level of such an effort, would have rescued you, though not from dying, yet from dying as a traitor to your final and farewell duty.

The situation here contemplated exposes a dreadful ulcer, lurking far down in the depths of human nature. It is not that men generally are summoned to face such awful trials. But potentially, and in shadowy outline, such a trial is moving subterraneously in perhaps all men's natures. Upon the secret mirror of our dreams such a trial is darkly projected, perhaps, to every one of us. That dream, so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and, through languishing prostration in hope and the energies of hope, that constant sequel of lying down before the lion, publishes the secret frailty of human nature—reveals its deep-seated falsehood to itself—records its abysmal treachery. Perhaps not one of us escapes that dream; perhaps, as by some sorrowful doom of man, that dream repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation of Eden. Every one of us, in this dream, has a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will; once again a snare is presented for tempting him into captivity to a luxury of ruin; once again, as in aboriginal Paradise, the man falls by his own choice; again, by infinite iteration, the ancient Earth groans to Heaven, through her secret caves, over the weakness of her child: "Nature, from her seat, sighing through all her works," again "gives signs of woe that all is lost"; and again the counter sign is repeated to the sorrowing heavens for the endless rebellion against God. It is not without probability that in the world of dreams every one of us ratifies for himself the original transgression. In dreams, perhaps under some secret conflict of the midnight sleeper, lighted up to the consciousness at the time, but darkened to the memory as soon as all is finished, each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the treason of the aboriginal fall.

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The incident, so memorable in itself by its features of horror, and so scenical by its grouping for the eye, which furnished the text for this reverie upon *Sudden Death*, occurred to myself in the dead of night, as a solitary spectator, when seated on the box of the Manchester and Glasgow

mail, in the second or third summer after Waterloo. I find it necessary to relate the circumstances, because they are such as could not have occurred unless under a singular combination of accidents. In those days, the oblique and lateral communications with many rural post-offices were so arranged, either through necessity or through defect of system, as to make it requisite for the main north-western mail (*i.e.*, the *down* mail), on reaching Manchester, to halt for a number of hours ; how many, I do not remember ; six or seven, I think ; but the result was, that, in the ordinary course, the mail recommenced its journey northwards about midnight. Wearied with the long detentions at a gloomy hotel, I walked out about eleven o'clock at night for the sake of fresh air ; meaning to fall in with the mail and resume my seat at the post-office. The night, however, being yet dark, as the moon had scarcely risen, and the streets being at that hour empty, so as to offer no opportunities for asking the road, I lost my way ; and did not reach the post-office until it was considerably past midnight ; but, to my great relief (as it was important for me to be in Westmoreland by the morning), I saw in the huge saucer eyes of the mail, blazing through the gloom, an evidence that my chance was not yet lost. Past the time it was ; but, by some rare accident, the mail was not even yet ready to start. I ascended to my seat on the box, where my cloak was still lying as it had lain at the Bridgewater Arms. I had left it there in imitation of a nautical discoverer, who leaves a bit of bunting on the shore of his discovery, by way of warning off the ground the whole human race, and notifying to the Christian and the heathen worlds, with his best compliments, that he has hoisted his pocket-handkerchief once and for ever upon that virgin soil ; thenceforward claiming the *jus dominii* to the top of the atmosphere above it, and also the right of driving shafts to the centre of the earth below it ; so that all people found after this warning, either aloft in upper chambers of the atmosphere, or groping in subterraneous shafts, or squatting audaciously on the surface of the soil, will be treated as trespassers—kicked, that is to say, or decapitated, as circumstances may suggest, by their very faithful servant, the owner of the said pocket-handkerchief. In the present case, it is probable that my cloak might not have been respected, and the *jus gentium* might have been cruelly violated in my person—for, in the dark, people commit deeds of darkness, gas being a great ally of morality—but

it so happened that, on this night, there was no other outside passenger; and thus the crime, which else was but too probable, missed fire for want of a criminal.

Having mounted the box, I took a small quantity of laudanum, having already travelled two hundred and fifty miles—viz., from a point seventy miles beyond London. In the taking of laudanum there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident it drew upon me the special attention of my assessor on the box, the coachman. And in *that* also there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident, and with great delight, it drew my own attention to the fact that this coachman was a monster in point of bulk, and that he had but one eye. In fact, he had been foretold by Virgil as

“Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum.”

He answered to the conditions in every one of the items:—1. a monster he was; 2. dreadful; 3. shapeless; 4. huge; 5. who had lost an eye. But why should *that* delight me? Had he been one of the Calendars in the “Arabian Nights,” and had paid down his eye as the price of his criminal curiosity, what right had *I* to exult in his misfortune? I did *not* exult: I delighted in no man’s punishment, though it were even merited. But these personal distinctions (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) identified in an instant an old friend of mine, whom I had known in the south for some years as the most masterly of mail-coachmen. He was the man in all Europe that could (if *any* could) have driven six-in-hand full gallop over *Al Sirat*—that dreadful bridge of Mahomet, with no side battlements, and of *extra* room not enough for a razor’s edge—leading right across the bottomless gulf. Under this eminent man, whom in Greek I cognominated Cyclops *diphrelales* (Cyclops the charioteer), I, and others known to me, studied the diphrelatic art. Excuse, reader, a word too elegant to be pedantic. As a pupil, though I paid extra fees, it is to be lamented that I did not stand high in his esteem. It showed his dogged honesty (though, observe, not his discernment), that he could not see my merits. Let us excuse his absurdity in this particular, by remembering his want of an eye. Doubtless *that* made him blind to my merits. In the art of conversation, however, he admitted that I had the whip-hand of him. On this present occasion, great joy was at our meeting. But what was Cyclops doing here? Had the medical men

recommended northern air, or how? I collected, from such explanations as he volunteered, that he had an interest at stake in some suit-at-law now pending at Lancaster; so that probably he had got himself transferred to this station, for the purpose of connecting with his professional pursuits an instant readiness for the calls of his lawsuit.

Meantime, what are we stopping for? Surely we have now waited long enough. Oh, this procrastinating mail, and this procrastinating post-office! Can't they take a lesson upon that subject from *me*? Some people have called *me* procrastinating. Yet you are witness, reader, that I was here kept waiting for the post-office. Will the post-office lay its hand on its heart, in its moments of sobriety, and assert that ever it waited for me? What are they about? The guard tells me that there is a large extra accumulation of foreign mails this night, owing to irregularities caused by war, by wind, by weather, in the packet service, which as yet does not benefit at all by steam. For an *extra* hour, it seems, the post-office has been engaged in threshing out the pure wheaten correspondence of Glasgow, and winnowing it from the chaff of all baser intermediate towns. But at last all is finished. Sound your horn, guard. Manchester, good-bye; we've lost an hour by your criminal conduct at the post-office: which, however, though I do not mean to part with a serviceable ground of complaint, and one which really *is* such for the horses, to me secretly is an advantage, since it compels us to look sharply for this lost hour amongst the next eight or nine, and to recover it (if we can) at the rate of one mile extra per hour. Off we are at last, and at eleven miles an hour; and for the moment I detect no changes in the energy or in the skill of Cyclops.

From Manchester to Kendal, which virtually (though not in law) is the capital of Westmoreland, there were at this time seven stages of eleven miles each. The first five of these, counting from Manchester, terminate in Lancaster, which is therefore fifty-five miles north of Manchester, and the same distance exactly from Liverpool. The first three stages terminate in Preston (called, by way of distinction from the other towns of that name, *proud* Preston), at which place it is that the separate roads from Liverpool and from Manchester to the north become confluent.* Within these first three stages lay the foundation,

* "*Confluent*":—Suppose a capital Y (the Pythagorean letter): Lancaster is at the foot of the letter; Liverpool at the top of the

the progress, and termination of our night's adventure. During the first stage, I found out that Cyclops was mortal : he was liable to the shocking affection of sleep—a thing which previously I had never suspected. If a man indulges in the vicious habit of sleeping, all the skill in aurigation of Apollo himself, with the horses of Aurora to execute his notions, avail him nothing. “ Oh, Cyclops ! ” I exclaimed, “ thou art mortal. My friend, thou snoorest.” Through the first eleven miles, however, this infirmity—which I grieve to say that he shared with the whole Pagan Pantheon—betrayed itself only by brief snatches. On waking up, he made an apology for himself, which, instead of mending matters, laid open a gloomy vista of coming disasters. The summer assizes, he reminded me, were now going on at Lancaster : in consequence of which, for three nights and three days, he had not lain down in a bed. During the day, he was waiting for his own summons as a witness on the trial in which he was interested ; or else, lest he should be missing at the critical moment, was drinking with the other witnesses, under the pastoral surveillance of the attorneys. During the night, or that part of it which at sea would form the middle watch, he was driving. This explanation certainly accounted for his drowsiness, but in a way which made it much more alarming ; since now, after several days' resistance to this infirmity, at length he was steadily giving way. Throughout the second stage he grew more and more drowsy. In the second mile of the third stage, he surrendered himself finally and without a struggle to his perilous temptation. All his past resistance had but deepened the weight of this final oppression. Seven atmospheres of sleep rested upon him ; and to consummate the case, our worthy guard, after singing “ Love amongst the Roses ” for perhaps thirty times, without invitation, and without applause, had in revenge moodily resigned himself to slumber—not so deep, doubtless, as the coachman's, but deep enough for mischief. And thus at last, about ten miles from Preston, it came about that I found myself left in charge of his Majesty's London and Glasgow mail, then running at the least twelve miles an hour.

What made this negligence less criminal than else it

right branch ; Manchester at the top of the *left* ; proud Preston at the centre, where the two branches unite. It is thirty-three miles along either of the two branches ; it is twenty-two miles along the stem—viz., from Preston in the middle, to Lancaster at the root. There's a lesson in geography for the reader.

must have been thought, was the condition of the roads at night during the assizes. At that time, all the law business of populous Liverpool, and also of populous Manchester, with its vast cincture of populous rural districts, was called up by ancient usage to the tribunal of Lilliputian Lancaster. To break up this old traditional usage required, 1. a conflict with powerful established interests; 2. a large system of new arrangements; and 3. a new parliamentary statute. But as yet this change was merely in contemplation. As things were at present, twice in the year * so vast a body of business rolled northwards, from the southern quarter of the county, that for a fortnight at least it occupied the severe exertions of two judges in its despatch. The consequence of this was, that every horse available for such a service, along the whole line of road, was exhausted in carrying down the multitudes of people who were parties to the different suites. By sunset, therefore, it usually happened that, through utter exhaustion amongst men and horses, the roads sank into profound silence. Except the exhaustion in the vast adjacent county of York from a contested election, no such silence succeeding to no such fiery uproar was ever witnessed in England.

On this occasion, the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. For my own part, though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, I had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was August, in the middle of which lay my own birthday—a festival to every thoughtful man suggesting solemn and often sigh-born † thoughts. The county was my own native county—upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the original curse of labour in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies only of men as of slaves, or criminals in mines, but working through the fiery will. Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put

* "*Twice in the year*":—There were at that time only two assizes even in the most populous counties—viz., the Lent Assizes, and the Summer Assizes.

† "*Sigh-born*":—I owe the suggestion of this word to an obscure remembrance of a beautiful phrase in "*Giraldus Cambrensis*"—viz., *suspiriosæ cogitationes*.

forth daily. At this particular season also of the assizes, that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a stranger, which swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly subsiding back into silence about sunset, could not fail (when united with this permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citadel of labour) to point the thoughts pathetically upon that counter vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, towards which, as to their secret haven, the profounder aspirations of man's heart are in solitude continually travelling. Obliquely upon our left we were nearing the sea, which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore each an orchestral part in this universal lull. Moonlight, and the first timid tremblings of the dawn, were by this time blending ; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses, which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made but little disturbance, there was no sound abroad. In the clouds, and on the earth, prevailed the same majestic peace ; and in spite of all that the villain of a school-master has done for the ruin of our sublimer thoughts, which are the thoughts of our infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with out false feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still believe, and must for ever believe, in fields of air traversing the total gulf between earth and the central heavens. Still, in the confidence of children that tread without fear *every* chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in our Sabbatic vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth, upwards to the sandals of God.

Suddenly, from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment ; I listened in awe ; but then it died away. Once roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion ; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence

of mind. On the contrary, my fear is, that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for *action*. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have, as regards *thought*, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution; in the radix of the series I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. *Us*, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision. And I had ridden through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter to look back upon, the first face of which was horror—the parting face a jest, for any anxiety to rest upon *our* interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray *me* who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then, it may be said, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side; and two wrongs might make a right. *That* was not likely. The same motive which had drawn *us* to the right-hand side of the road—viz., the luxury of the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre—would prove attractive to others. The two adverse carriages would therefore, to a certainty, be travelling on the same side; and from this side, as not being ours in law, the crossing over to the other would, of course, be looked for from *us*.* Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us, would rely upon *us* for quartering.† All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw, not discursively, or by effort, or by succession, but by one flash of horrid simultaneous intuition.

* It is true that, according to the law of the case as established by legal precedents, all carriages were required to give way before Royal equipages, and therefore before the mail as one of them. But this only increased the danger, as being a regulation very imperfectly made known, very unequally enforced, and therefore often embarrassing the movements on both sides.

† “*Quartering*” :—This is the technical word, and, I presume, derived from the French *cartayer*, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which *might* be gathering ahead, ah ! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of woe, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard ! A whisper it was—a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off—secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable ; that, being known, was not, therefore, healed. What could be done—who was it that could do it—to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses ? Could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman ? You, reader, think that it would have been in *your* power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. Easy, was it ? See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Easy, was it ? Unhorse me, then, that imperial rider ; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be ? Was it industry in a taxed cart ? Was it youthful gaiety in a gig ? Was it sorrow that loitered, or joy that raced ? For as yet the snatches of sound were too intermitting, from distance, to decipher the character of the motion. Whoever were the travellers, something must be done to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon *us*—and, woe is me ! that *us* was reduced to my frail opium-shattered self—rests the responsibility of warning. Yet, how should this be accomplished ? Might I not sound the guard's horn ? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the accident which I have mentioned, of the foreign mails being piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us that final stage where the collision must be accomplished, and the catastrophe sealed. All was apparently finished. The court was sitting ; the case was heard ; the judge had finished ; and only the verdict was yet in arrear.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length ; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light ; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the further end of this Gothic aisle, a frail, reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and by his side a young lady. Ah, young sir ! what are you about ? If it is requisite that you should whisper your communications to this young lady—though really I see nobody, at an hour and on a road so solitary, likely to overhear you—is it therefore requisite that you should carry your lips forward to hers ? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour ; and the parties within it being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half. Oh heavens ! what is it that I shall do ? Speaking or acting, what help can I offer ? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the “ Iliad ” to prompt the sole resource that remained. Yet so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles, and its effect. But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas ? No ; but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant ; such a shout would suffice as might carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and one gig-horse, I shouted—and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted—and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

Here, then, all had been done that, by me, *could* be done : more on *my* part was not possible. Mine had been the first step ; the second was for the young man ; the third was for God. If, said I, this stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side—or, loving her not, if he feels the obligation, pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection—he will, at least, make some effort to save her. If *that* fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it ; and he will die as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But, if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery.

He will die no less : and why not ? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world ? No ; let him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him ; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl who now, upon the least shadow of failure in *him*, must, by the fiercest of translations—must, without time for a prayer—must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

But craven he was not : sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down already its gloomy shadow darkened above him ; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah ! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a-day : ah ! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful summons on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some tumultuous crisis, from which lie two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, “ One way lies hope ; take the other and mourn for ever ! ” How grand a triumph, if, even then, amidst the raving of all around him, and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation—able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek his counsel from *him* !

For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more of his seventy he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five more, perhaps, he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for light that should guide him to the better choice. Then suddenly he rose ; stood upright ; and by a powerful strain upon the reins, raising his horse's fore-feet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind-legs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done ; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late : fifteen of the seventy seconds may still be unexhausted ; and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry ! for the

flying moments—*they* hurry ! Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man ! for the cruel hoofs of our horses—*they* also hurry ! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for *him*, if human energy can suffice ; faithful was he that drove to his terrific duty ; faithful was the horse to *his* command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand, by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of the little equipage had then cleared our over-towering shadow : *that* was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage—was *that* certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin ? What power could answer the question ? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other ? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly, than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. *That* must the young man have felt too plainly. His back was now turned to us ; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril ; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed—that all was finished as regarded any further effort of *his*. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle ; and, perhaps in his heart he was whispering, “ Father, which art in heaven, do thou finish above what I on earth have attempted.” Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit ! Even in that moment the thunder of collision spoke aloud. Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely, and not quite so far advanced, as to be accurately parallel with the near-wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to gaze upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its own tale, and wrote all its records on my heart for ever.

Here was the map of the passion that now had finished. The horse was planted immovably, with his fore-feet upon

the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party might be supposed untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage—partly, perhaps, from the violent torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it—as if it sympathised with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man trembled not, nor shivered. He sat like a rock. But *his* was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. And yet he dared not to look round; for he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady——

But the lady——! Oh, heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing? Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of that unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night—from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight—from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love—suddenly as from the woods and fields—suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation—suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crownéd phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered; the strife was finished; the vision was closed. In the twinkling of an eye, our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.

SECTION THE THIRD

DREAM-FUGUE

FOUNDED ON THE PRECEDING THEME OF SUDDEN DEATH

“ Whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ ; and who moved
Their stops and chords, was seen ; his volant touch
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.”

Par. Lost, B. xi.

Tumultuosissimamente

PASSION of sudden death ! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted signs ! *—rapture of panic taking the shape (which amongst tombs in churches I have seen) of woman bursting her sepulchral bonds—of woman’s Ionic form bending forward from the ruins of her grave with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped adoring hands—waiting, watching, trembling, praying for the trumpet’s call to rise from dust for ever ! Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity on the brink of almighty abysses ! vision that didst start back, that didst reel away, like a shrivelled scroll from before the wrath of fire racing on the wings of the wind ! Epilepsy so brief of horror, wherefore is it that thou canst not die ? Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaics of dreams ? Fragment of music too passionate, heard once, and heard no more, what aileth thee, that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through all the worlds of sleep, and after forty years, have lost no element of horror ?

“ *Averted signs* ” :—I read the course and changes of the lady’s agony in the succession of her involuntary gestures ; but it must be remembered that I read all this from the rear, never once catching the lady’s full face, and even her profile imperfectly.

I

Lo, it is summer—almighty summer! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide; and on the ocean, tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating—she upon a fairy pinnacle, and I upon an English three-decker. Both of us are wooing gales of festal happiness within the domain of our common country, within that ancient watery park, within that pathless chase of ocean, where England takes her pleasure as a huntress through winter and summer, from the rising to the setting sun. Ah, what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnacle moved! And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers—young women how lovely, young men how noble, that were dancing together, and slowly drifting towards us amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural carolling and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnacle nears us, gaily she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music, and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter—all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnacle, meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow? Was our shadow the shadow of death? I looked over the bow for an answer, and, behold! the pinnacle was dismantled; the revel and the revellers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas. “But where,” and I turned to our crew—“where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and clustering corymbi? Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with *them*?” Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the mast-head, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried out, “Sail on the weather beam! Down she comes upon us: in seventy seconds she also will founder.”

II

I looked to the weather side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaken with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sat mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a cross-bow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. "Are they mad?" some voice exclaimed from our deck. "Do they woo their ruin?" But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnacle. The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert spaces of the sea: whilst still by sight I followed her, as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling—rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying—there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden for ever in driving showers; and afterwards, but when I know not, nor how.

III

Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl, adorned with a garland of white roses about her head for some great festival, running along the solitary strand in extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic; and often she looked back as to some dreadful enemy in the rear. But

when I leaped ashore, and followed on her steps to warn her of a peril in front, alas ! from me she fled as from another peril, and vainly I shouted to her of the quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran ; round a promontory of rocks she wheeled out of sight ; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sand gathering above her head. Already her person was buried ; only the fair young head and the diadem of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens ; and, last of all, was visible one white marble arm. I saw by the early twilight this fair young head, as it was sinking down to darkness—saw this marble arm, as it rose above her head and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching as at some false deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds—saw this marble arm uttering her dying hope, and then uttering her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm—these all had sunk ; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed ; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child, and over her blighted dawn.

I sat, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth, our mother. But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar as from some great king's artillery, advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by echoes from the mountains. "Hush !" I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen—"hush !—this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else"—and then I listened more profoundly, and whispered as I raised my head—"or else, oh heavens ! it is *victory* that is final, victory that swallows up all strife."

IV

Immediately, in trance, I was carried over land and sea to some distant kingdom, and placed upon a triumphal car, amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight, brooding over all the land, hid from us the mighty crowds that were weaving restlessly about ourselves as a centre : we heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived, within an hour, of a grandeur that

measured itself against centuries ; too full of pathos they were, too full of joy, to utter themselves by other language than by tears, by restless anthems, and *Te Deums* reverberated from the choirs and orchestras of earth. These tidings we that sat upon the laurelled car had it for our privilege to publish amongst all nations. And already, by signs audible through the darkness, by snortings and trappings, our angry horses, that knew no fear of fleshly weariness, upbraided us with delay. Wherefore *was* it that we delayed ? We waited for a secret word, that should bear witness to the hope of nations, as now accomplished for ever. At midnight the secret word arrived ; which word was—Waterloo and Recovered Christendom ! The dreadful word shone by its own light ; before us it went ; high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over the paths which we traversed. Every city, at the presence of the secret word, threw open its gates. The rivers were conscious as we crossed. All the forests, as we ran along their margins, shivered in homage to the secret word. And the darkness comprehended it.

Two hours after midnight we approached a mighty Minster. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word, that rode before us, reached them with its golden light, silently they moved back upon their hinges ; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the grand aisle of the cathedral. Headlong was our pace ; and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and left of our course, the lamps, dying or sickening, kindled anew in sympathy with the secret word that was flying past. Forty leagues we might have run in the cathedral, and as yet no strength of morning light had reached us, when before us we saw the aerial galleries of organ and choir. Every pinnacle of the fretwork, every station of advantage amongst the traceries, was crested by white-robed choristers, that sang deliverance ; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept ; but at intervals that sang together to the generations, saying,

“ Chant the deliverer's praise in every tongue,”

and receiving answers from afar,

“ Such as once in heaven and earth were sung.”

And of their chanting was no end ; of our headlong pace was neither pause nor slackening.

Thus, as we ran like torrents—thus, as we swept with

bridal rapture over the Campo Santo * of the cathedral graves—suddenly we became aware of a vast necropolis rising upon the far-off horizon—a city of sepulchres, built within the saintly cathedral for the warrior dead that rested from their feuds on earth. Of purple granite was the necropolis ; yet, in the first minute, it lay like a purple stain upon the horizon, so mighty was the distance. In the second minute it trembled through many changes, growing into terraces and towers of wondrous altitude, so mighty was the pace. In the third minute already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering the suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central aisle, strode forward with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs—bas-reliefs of battles and of battle-fields ; battles from forgotten ages—battles from yesterday—battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers—battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did *we* run ; where the towers curved, there did *we* curve. With the flight of swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood, wheeling round headlands—like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests—faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions, kindled warrior instincts, amongst the dust that lay around us—dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Créci to Trafalgar. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now were we abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when coming up this aisle to meet us we beheld afar off a female child, that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists, which went before

* "*Campo Santo* " :—It is probable that most of my readers will be acquainted with the history of the Campo Santo (or cemetery) at Pisa, composed of earth brought from Jerusalem for a bed of sanctity, as the highest prize which the noble piety of crusaders could ask or imagine. To readers who are unacquainted with England, or who (being English) are yet unacquainted with the cathedral cities of England, it may be right to mention that the graves within-side the cathedrals often form a flat pavement over which carriages and horses *might* run ; and perhaps a boyish remembrance of one particular cathedral, across which I have seen passengers walk and burdens carried, as about two centuries back they were through the middle of St. Paul's in London, may have assisted my dream.

her, hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played—but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked down upon her from the mighty shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us; face to face she rode, as if danger there were none. “Oh, baby!” I exclaimed, “shalt thou be the ransom for Waterloo? Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee!” In horror I rose at the thought; but then also, in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured on a bas-relief—a Dying Trumpeter. Solemnly from the field of battle he rose to his feet; and, unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it, in his dying anguish, to his stony lips—sounding once, and yet once again; proclamation that, in *thy* ears, oh, baby! spoke from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and aboriginal silence. The choir had ceased to sing. The hoofs of our horses, the dreadful rattle of our harness, the groaning of our wheels, alarmed the graves no more. By horror the bas-relief had been unlocked into life. By horror we, that were so full of life, we men and our horses, with their fiery fore-legs rising in midair to their everlasting gallop, were frozen to a bas-relief. Then a third time the trumpet sounded; the seals were taken off all pulses; life, and the frenzy of life, tore into their channels again; again the choir burst forth in sunny grandeur, as from the muffling of storms and darkness; again the thunderings of our horses carried temptation into the graves. One cry burst from our lips, as the clouds, drawing off from the aisle, showed it empty before us—“Whither has the infant fled?—is the young child caught up to God?” Lo! afar off, in a vast recess, rose three mighty windows to the clouds; and on a level with their summits, at height insuperable to man, rose an altar of purest alabaster. On its eastern face was trembling a crimson glory. A glory was it from the reddening dawn that now streamed *through* the windows? Was it from the crimson robes of the martyrs painted on the windows? Was it from the bloody bas-reliefs of earth? There, suddenly, within that crimson radiance, rose the apparition of a woman’s head, and then of a woman’s figure. The child it was—grown up to woman’s height. Clinging to the horns of the altar, voiceless she stood—sinking, rising, raving, despairing; and behind the volume of incense, that, night and day, streamed

upwards from the altar, dimly was seen the fiery font, and the shadow of that dreadful being who should have baptized her with the baptism of death. But by her side was kneeling her better angel, that hid his face with wings; that wept and pleaded for *her*; that prayed when *she* could not; that fought with Heaven by tears for *her* deliverance; which also, as he raised his immortal countenance from his wings, I saw, by the glory in his eye, that from Heaven he had won at last.

V

Then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but muttered at intervals—gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense—threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter!—with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing—didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo—farewell love, and farewell anguish—rang through the dreadful *sanctus*. Oh, darkness of the grave! that from the crimson altar and from the fiery font were visited and searched by the effulgence in the angel's eye—were these indeed thy children? Poms of life, that, from the burials of centuries rose again to the voice of perfect joy, did ye indeed mingle with the festivals of Death? Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues through the mighty cathedral, I saw the quick and the dead that sang together to God, together that sang to the generations of man. All the hosts of jubilation, like armies that ride in pursuit, moved with one step. Us, that, with laurelled heads, were passing from the cathedral, they overtook, and, as with a garment, they wrapped us round with thunders greater than our own. As brothers we moved together; to the dawn that advanced—to the stars that fled; rendering thanks to God in the highest—that, having hid his face through one generation behind thick clouds of War, once again was ascending—from the Campo Santo of Waterloo was ascending—in the visions of Peace; rendering thanks for thee, young girl! whom, having overshadowed with his ineffable passion of death, suddenly did God relent; suffered thy angel to turn aside his arm; and even in thee, sister unknown! shown to me

for a moment only to be hidden for ever, found an occasion to glorify his goodness. A thousand times, amongst the phantoms of sleep, have I seen thee entering the gates of the golden dawn—with the secret word riding before thee—with the armies of the grave behind thee; seen thee sinking, rising, raving, despairing; a thousand times in the worlds of sleep have seen thee followed by God's angel through storms; through desert seas; through the darkness of quicksands; through dreams, and the dreadful revelations that are in dreams—only that at the last, with one sling of his victorious arm, he might snatch thee back from ruin, and might emblazon in thy deliverance the endless resurrections of his love!

EXPLANATORY NOTICE

PREFIXED TO THE REVISED EDITION OF 1858

"THE English Mail-Coach":—This little paper, according to my original intention, formed part of the "*Suspiria de Profundis*," from which, for a momentary purpose, I did not scruple to detach it, and to publish it apart, as sufficiently intelligible even when dislocated from its place in a larger whole. To my surprise, however, one or two critics, not carelessly in conversation, but deliberately in print, professed their inability to apprehend the meaning of the whole, or to follow the links of the connection between its several parts. I am myself as little able to understand where the difficulty lies, or to detect any lurking obscurity, as those critics found themselves to unravel my logic. Possibly I may not be an indifferent and neutral judge in such a case. I will therefore sketch a brief abstract of the little paper according to my own original design, and then leave the reader to judge how far this design is kept in sight through the actual execution.

Thirty-seven years ago, or rather more, accident made me, in the dead of night, and of a night memorably solemn, the solitary witness to an appalling scene, which threatened instant death in a shape the most terrific to two young people, whom I had no means of assisting, except in so far as I was able to give them a most hurried warning of their danger; but even *that* not until they stood within the very shadow of the catastrophe, being divided from the most frightful of deaths by scarcely more, if more at all, than seventy seconds.

Such was the scene, such in its outline, from which the whole of this paper radiates as a natural expansion. This scene is circumstantially narrated in Section the Second, entitled, "*The Vision of Sudden Death*."

But a movement of horror, and of spontaneous recoil from this dreadful scene, naturally carried the whole of that scene, raised and

idealised, into my dreams, and very soon into a rolling succession of dreams. The actual scene, as looked down upon from the box of the mail, was transformed into a dream, as tumultuous and changing as a musical fugue. This troubled Dream is circumstantially reported in Section the Third, entitled, "Dream-Fugue upon the Theme of Sudden Death." What I had beheld from my seat upon the mail; the scenical strife of action and passion, of anguish and fear, as I had there witnessed them moving in ghostly silence; this duel between life and death narrowing itself to a point of such exquisite evanescence as the collision neared; all these elements of the scene blended, under the law of association, with the previous and permanent features of distinction investing the mail itself: which features at that time lay—first, in velocity unprecedented; secondly, in the power and beauty of the horses; thirdly, in the official connection with the government of a great nation; and, fourthly, in the function, almost a consecrated function, of publishing and diffusing through the land the great political events, and especially the great battles during a conflict of unparalleled grandeur. These honorary distinctions are all described circumstantially in the FIRST or introductory section ("The Glory of Motion"). The three first were distinctions maintained at all times; but the fourth and grandest belonged exclusively to the war with Napoleon; and this it was which most naturally introduced Waterloo into the dream. Waterloo, I understand, was the particular feature of the "Dream-Fugue" which my censors were least able to account for. Yet surely Waterloo, which, in common with every other great battle, it had been our special privilege to publish over all the land, most naturally entered the Dream under the license of our privilege. If not—if there be anything amiss—let the Dream be responsible. The Dream is a law to itself: and as well quarrel with a rainbow for showing, or for *not* showing, a secondary arch. So far as I know, every element in the shifting movements of the Dream derived itself either primarily from the incidents of the actual scene, or from secondary features associated with the mail. For example, the cathedral aisle derived itself from the mimic combination of features which grouped themselves together at the point of approaching collision—viz., an arrow-like section of the road, six hundred yards long, under the solemn lights described, with lofty trees meeting overhead in arches. The guard's horn, again—a humble instrument in itself—was yet glorified as the organ of publication for so many great national events. And the incident of the Dying Trumpeter, who rises from a marble bas-relief, and carries a marble trumpet to his marble lips for the purpose of warning the female infant, was doubtless secretly suggested by my own imperfect effort to seize the guard's horn, and to blow a warning blast. But the Dream knows best; and the Dream, I say again, is the responsible party.

THE AFFLICTION OF CHILDHOOD

ABOUT the close of my sixth year, suddenly the first chapter of my life came to a violent termination; that chapter which, even within the gates of recovered Paradise, might merit a remembrance. "*Life is Finished!*" was the secret misgiving of my heart; for the heart of infancy is as apprehensive as that of maturest wisdom in relation to any capital wound inflicted on the happiness. "*Life is Finished! Finished it is!*" was the hidden meaning that, half unconsciously to myself, lurked within my sighs; and, as bells heard from a distance on a summer evening seem charged at times with an articulate form of words, some monitory message, that rolls round unceasingly, even so for me some noiseless and subterraneous voice seemed to chant continually a secret word, made audible only to my own heart—that "now is the blossoming of life withered for ever." Not that such words formed themselves vocally within my ear, or issued audibly from my lips: but such a whisper stole silently to my heart. Yet in what sense could *that* be true? For an infant not more than six years old, was it possible that the promises of life had been really blighted? or its golden pleasures exhausted? Had I seen Rome? Had I read Milton? Had I heard Mozart? No. St. Peter's, the "*Paradise Lost*," the divine melodies of "*Don Giovanni*," all alike were as yet unrevealed to me, and not more through the accidents of my position than through the necessity of my yet imperfect sensibilities. Raptures there might be in arrear; but raptures are modes of *troubled* pleasure. The peace, the rest, the central security which belong to love that is past all understanding—these could return no more. Such a love, so unfathomable—such a peace, so unvexed by storms, or the fear of storms—had brooded over those four latter years of my infancy, which brought me into special rela-

tions to my eldest sister ; she being at this period three years older than myself. The circumstances which attended the sudden dissolution of this most tender connection I will here rehearse. And, that I may do so more intelligibly, I will first describe that serene and sequestered position which we occupied in life.*

Any expression of personal vanity, intruding upon impassioned records, is fatal to their effect—as being incompatible with that absorption of spirit and that self-oblivion in which only deep passion originates, or can find a genial home. It would, therefore, to myself be exceedingly painful that even a shadow, or so much as a *seeming* expression of that tendency, should creep into these reminiscences. And yet, on the other hand, it is so impossible, without laying an injurious restraint upon the natural movement of such a narrative, to prevent oblique gleams reaching the reader from such circumstances of luxury or aristocratic elegance as surrounded my childhood, that on all accounts I think it better to tell him, from the first, with the simplicity of truth, in what order of society my family moved at the time from which this preliminary narrative is dated. Otherwise it might happen that, merely by reporting faithfully the facts of this early experience, I could hardly prevent the reader from receiving an impression as of some higher rank than did really belong to my family. And this impression might seem to have been designedly insinuated by myself.

My father was a merchant ; not in the sense of Scotland,

* As occasions arise in these Sketches, when, merely for the purposes of intelligibility, it becomes requisite to call into notice such personal distinctions in my family, as otherwise might be unimportant, I here record the entire list of my brothers and sisters, according to their order of succession ; and Miltonically I include myself ; having surely as much logical right to count myself in the series of my own brothers as Milton could have to pronounce Adam the goodliest of his own sons. First and last, we counted as eight children—viz., four brothers and four sisters, though never counting more than six living at once—viz., 1. *William*, older than myself by more than five years ; 2. *Elizabeth* ; 3. *Jane*, who died in her 4th year ; 4. *Mary* ; 5. myself, certainly not the goodliest man of men since born my brothers ; 6. *Richard*, known to us all by the household name of *Pink*, who in his after years tilted up and down what might then be called his Britannic Majesty's oceans (viz., the Atlantic and Pacific) in the quality of midshipman, until Waterloo in one day put an extinguisher on that whole generation of midshipmen, by extinguishing all further call for their services ; 7. a second *Jane* ; 8. *Henry*, a posthumous child, who belonged to Brazennose College, Oxford, and died about his 26th year.

where it means a retail dealer, one, for instance, who sells groceries in a cellar, but in the English sense, a sense rigorously exclusive; that is, he was a man engaged in *foreign* commerce, and no other; therefore, in *wholesale* commerce, and no other:—which last limitation of the idea is important, because it brings him within the benefit of Cicero's condescending distinction *—as one who ought to be despised certainly, but not too intensely to be despised even by a Roman senator. He—this imperfectly despicable man—died at an early age, and very soon after the incidents recorded in this chapter, leaving to his family, then consisting of a wife and six children, an unburdened estate producing exactly £1600 a year. Naturally, therefore, at the date of my narrative—whilst he was still living—he had an income very much larger, from the addition of current commercial profits. Now, to any man who is acquainted with commercial life as it exists in England, it will readily occur that in an opulent English family of that class—opulent, though not emphatically *rich* in a mercantile estimate—the domestic economy is pretty sure to move upon a scale of liberality altogether unknown amongst the corresponding orders in foreign nations. The establishment of servants, for instance, in such houses, measured even *numerically* against those establishments in other nations, would somewhat surprise the foreign appraiser, simply as interpreting the relative station in society occupied by the English merchant. But this same establishment, when measured by the quality and amount of the provision made for its comfort and even elegant accommodation, would fill him with twofold astonishment, as interpreting equally the social valuation of the English merchant, and also the social valuation of the English servant: for, in the truest sense, England is the paradise of household servants. Liberal housekeeping, in fact, as extending itself to the meanest servants, and the disdain of petty parsimonies, are peculiar to England. And in this respect the families of English merchants, as a class, far outrun the scale of expenditure prevalent, not only amongst the corresponding bodies of Continental nations, but even amongst the poor sections of our own nobility—though confessedly the most splendid in Europe; a fact which, since the period of my infancy, I have had many personal opportunities for verifying both

* Cicero, in a well-known passage of his "Ethics," speaks of trade as irredeemably base, if petty, but as not so absolutely felonious if wholesale.

in England and in Ireland. From this peculiar anomaly, affecting the domestic economy of English merchants, there arises a disturbance upon the usual scale for measuring the relations of rank. The equation, so to speak, between rank and the ordinary expressions of rank, which usually runs parallel to the graduations of expenditure, is here interrupted and confounded, so that one rank would be collected from the name of the occupation, and another rank, much higher, from the splendour of the domestic *ménage*. I warn the reader, therefore (or, rather, my explanation has already warned him), that he is not to infer, from any casual indications of luxury or elegance, a corresponding elevation of rank.

We, the children of the house, stood, in fact, upon the very happiest tier in the social scaffolding for all good influences. The prayer of Agar—"Give me neither poverty nor riches"—was realised for us. That blessing we had, being neither too high nor too low. High enough we were to see models of good manners, of self-respect, and of simple dignity; obscure enough to be left in the sweetest of solitudes. Amply furnished with all the nobler benefits of wealth, with *extra* means of health, of intellectual culture, and of elegant enjoyment, on the other hand, we knew nothing of its social distinctions. Not depressed by the consciousness of privation too sordid, not tempted into restlessness by the consciousness of privileges too aspiring, we had no motives for shame, we had none for pride. Grateful, also, to this hour I am that, amidst luxuries in all things else, we were trained to a Spartan simplicity of diet—that we fared, in fact, very much less sumptuously than the servants. And if (after the model of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius) I should return thanks to Providence for all the separate blessings of my early situation, these four I would single out as worthy of special commemoration—that I lived in a rustic solitude; that this solitude was in England; that my infant feelings were moulded by the gentlest of sisters, and not by horrid, pugilistic brothers; finally, that I and they were dutiful and loving members of a pure, holy, and magnificent church.

* * * * *

The earliest incidents in my life, which left stings in my memory, so as to be remembered at this day, were two, and both before I could have completed my second year; namely, 1st, a remarkable dream of terrific grandeur about

a favourite nurse, which is interesting to myself for this reason—that it demonstrates my dreaming tendencies to have been constitutional, and not dependent upon laudanum,* and, 2dly, the fact of having connected a profound sense of pathos with the re-appearance, very early in the spring, of some crocuses. This I mention as inexplicable; for such annual resurrections of plants and flowers affect us only as memorials, or suggestions of some higher change, and therefore in connection with the idea of death; yet of death I could, at that time, have had no experience whatever.

This, however, I was speedily to acquire. My two eldest sisters—eldest of three *then* living, and also elder than myself—were summoned to an early death. The first who died was Jane, about two years older than myself. She was three-and-a-half, I one-and-a-half, more or less by some trifle that I do not recollect. But death was then scarcely intelligible to me, and I could not so properly be said to suffer sorrow as a sad perplexity. There was another death in the house about the same time—namely, of a maternal grandmother; but, as she had come to us for the express purpose of dying in her daughter's society, and from illness had lived perfectly secluded, our nursery circle knew her but little, and were certainly more affected by the death (which I witnessed) of a beautiful bird—viz., a kingfisher, which had been injured by an accident. With my sister Jane's death (though otherwise, as I have said, less sorrowful than perplexing), there was, however, connected an incident which made a most fearful impression upon myself, deepening my tendencies to thoughtfulness and abstraction beyond what would seem credible for my years. If there was one thing in this world from which, more than from any other, nature had forced me to revolt, it was brutality and violence. Now, a whisper arose in the family that a female servant, who by accident was drawn off from her proper duties to attend my sister Jane for a day or two, had on one occasion treated her harshly, if not brutally; and as this ill-treatment happened

* It is true that in those days *paregoric elixir* was occasionally given to children in colds: and in this medicine there is a small proportion of laudanum. But no medicine was ever administered to any member of our nursery except under medical sanction; and this, assuredly, would not have been obtained to the exhibition of laudanum in a case such as mine. For I was then not more than 21 months old; at which age the action of opium is capricious, and therefore perilous.

within three or four days of her death, so that the occasion of it must have been some fretfulness in the poor child caused by her sufferings, naturally there was a sense of awe and indignation diffused through the family. I believe the story never reached my mother, and possibly it was exaggerated; but upon me the effect was terrific. I did not often see the person charged with this cruelty; but, when I did, my eyes sought the ground; nor could I have borne to look her in the face; not, however, in any spirit that could be called anger. The feeling which fell upon me was a shuddering horror, as upon a first glimpse of the truth that I was in a world of evil and strife. Though born in a large town (the town of Manchester, even then amongst the largest of the island), I had passed the whole of my childhood, except for the few earliest weeks, in a rural seclusion. With three innocent little sisters for playmates, sleeping always amongst them, and shut up for ever in a silent garden from all knowledge of poverty, or oppression, or outrage, I had not suspected until this moment the true complexion of the world in which myself and my sisters were living. Henceforward the character of my thoughts changed greatly; for so *representative* are some acts, that one single case of the class is sufficient to throw open before you the whole theatre of possibilities in that direction. I never heard that the woman accused of this cruelty took it at all to heart, even after the event which so immediately succeeded had reflected upon it a more painful emphasis. But for myself, that incident had a lasting revolutionary power in colouring my estimate of life.

So passed away from earth one of those three sisters that made up my nursery playmates; and so did my acquaintance (if such it could be called) commence with mortality. Yet, in fact, I knew little more of mortality than that Jane had disappeared. She had gone away; but, perhaps, she would come back. Happy interval of heaven-born ignorance! Gracious immunity of infancy from sorrow disproportioned to its strength! I was sad for Jane's absence. But still in my heart I trusted that she would come again. Summer and winter came again—crocuses and roses; why not little Jane?

Thus easily was healed, then, the first wound in my infant heart. Not so the second. For thou, dear, noble Elizabeth, around whose ample brow, as often as thy sweet countenance rises from the darkness, I fancy a *tiara* of light or a *gleaming aureola* * in token of thy

premature intellectual grandeur,—thou whose head, for its superb developments, was the astonishment of science,† —thou next, but after an interval of happy years, thou also wert summoned away from our nursery; and the night, which for me gathered upon that event, ran after my steps far into life; and perhaps at this day I resemble little for good or for ill that which else I should have been. Pillar of fire that didst go before me to guide and to quicken,—pillar of darkness, when thy countenance was turned away to God, that didst too truly reveal to my dawning fears the secret shadow of death, by what mysterious gravitation was it that *my* heart had been drawn to thine? Could a child, six years old, place any special value upon intellectual forwardness? Serene and capacious as my sister's mind appeared to me upon after review, was *that* a charm for stealing away the heart of an infant? O, no! I think of it *now* with interest, because it lends, in a stranger's ear, some justification to the excess of my fondness. But then it was lost upon me; or, if not lost, was perceived only through its effects. Hadst thou been an idiot, my sister, not the less I must have loved thee, having that capacious heart—overflowing, even

* “*Aureola*” :—The *aureola* is the name given in the “Legends of the Christian Saints” to that golden diadem or circlet of supernatural light (that *glory*, as it is commonly called in English) which, amongst the great masters of painting in Italy, surrounded the heads of Christ and of distinguished saints.

† “*The astonishment of science*” :—Her medical attendants were Dr. Percival, a well-known literary physician, who had been a correspondent of Condorcet, D’Alembert, etc., and Mr. Charles White, the most distinguished surgeon at that time in the North of England. It was he who pronounced her head to be the finest in its development of any that he had ever seen,—an assertion which, to my own knowledge, he repeated in after years, and with enthusiasm. That he had some acquaintance with the subject may be presumed from this, that, at so early a stage of such inquiries, he had published a work on human craniology, supported by measurements of heads selected from all varieties of the human species. Meantime, as it would grieve me that any trait of what might seem vanity should creep into this record, I will admit that my sister died of hydrocephalus; and it has been often supposed, that the premature expansion of the intellect in cases of that class is altogether morbid—forced on, in fact, by the mere stimulation of the disease. I would, however, suggest, as a possibility, the very opposite order of relation between the disease and the intellectual manifestations. Not the disease may always have caused the preternatural growth of the intellect; but, inversely, this growth of the intellect coming on spontaneously, and outrunning the capacities of the physical structure, may have caused the disease.

as mine overflowed, with tenderness, stung, even as mine was stung, by the necessity of loving and being loved. This it was which crowned thee with beauty and power :—

“ Love, the holy sense,
Best gift of God, in thee was most intense.”

That lamp of Paradise was, for myself, kindled by reflection from the living light which burned so steadfastly in thee ; and never but to thee, never again since *thy* departure, had I power or temptation, courage or desire, to utter the feelings which possessed me. For I was the shyest of children ; and, at all stages of life, a natural sense of personal dignity held me back from exposing the least ray of feelings which I was not encouraged *wholly* to reveal.

It is needless to pursue, circumstantially, the course of that sickness which carried off my leader and companion. She (according to my recollection at this moment) was just as near to nine years as I to six. And perhaps this natural precedency in authority of years and judgment, united to the tender humility with which she declined to assert it, had been amongst the fascinations of her presence. It was upon a Sunday evening, if such conjectures can be trusted, that the spark of fatal fire fell upon that train of predispositions to a brain complaint which had hitherto slumbered within her. She had been permitted to drink tea at the house of a labouring man, the father of a favourite female servant. The sun had set when she returned, in the company of this servant, through meadows reeking with exhalations after a fervent day. From that time she sickened. In such circumstances, a child, as young as myself, feels no anxieties. Looking upon medical men as people privileged, and naturally commissioned, to make war upon pain and sickness, I never had a misgiving about the result. I grieved, indeed, that my sister should lie in bed ; I grieved still more to hear her moan. But all this appeared to me no more than as a night of trouble, on which the dawn would soon arise. O ! moment of darkness and delirium, when the elder nurse awakened me from that delusion, and launched God's thunderbolt at my heart in the assurance that my sister must die. Rightly it is said of utter, utter misery, that it “ cannot be remembered.” * Itself, as

* “ I stood in unimaginable trance

And agony, which cannot be remember'd.”

Speech of Alhadra, in Coleridge's Remorse.

a rememberable thing, is swallowed up in its own chaos. Blank anarchy and confusion of mind fell upon me. Deaf and blind I was, as I reeled under the revelation. I wish not to recall the circumstances of that time, when *my* agony was at its height, and hers, in another sense, was approaching. Enough it is to say, that all was soon over; and the morning of that day had at last arrived which looked down upon her innocent face, sleeping the sleep from which there is no awaking, and upon me sorrowing the sorrow for which there is no consolation.

On the day after my sister's death, whilst the sweet temple of her brain was yet unviolated by human scrutiny, I formed my own scheme for seeing her once more. Not for the world would I have made this known, nor have suffered a witness to accompany me. I had never heard of feelings that take the name of "sentimental," nor dreamed of such a possibility. But grief, even in a child, hates the light, and shrinks from human eyes. The house was large enough to have two staircases; and by one of these I knew that about mid-day, when all would be quiet (for the servants dined at one o'clock), I could steal up into her chamber. I imagine that it was about an hour after high noon when I reached the chamber door; it was locked, but the key was not taken away. Entering, I closed the door so softly, that, although it opened upon a hall which ascended through all the storeys, no echo ran along the silent walls. Then, turning round, I sought my sister's face. But the bed had been moved, and the back was now turned towards myself. Nothing met my eyes but one large window, wide open, through which the sun of midsummer at mid-day was showering down torrents of splendour. The weather was dry, the sky was cloudless, the blue depths seemed to express types of infinity; and it was not possible for eye to behold, or for heart to conceive, any symbols more pathetic of life and the glory of life.

Let me pause for one instant in approaching a remembrance so affecting for my own mind, to mention that, in the "Opium Confessions," I endeavoured to explain the reason why death, other conditions remaining the same, is more profoundly affecting in summer than in other parts of the year—so far, at least, as it is liable to any modification at all from accidents of scenery or season. The reason, as I there suggested, lies in the antagonism between the

tropical redundancy of life in summer, and the frozen sterilities of the grave. The summer we see, the grave we haunt with our thoughts ; the glory is around us, the darkness is within us ; and, the two coming into collision, each exalts the other into stronger relief. But, in my case, there was even a subtler reason why the summer had this intense power of vivifying the spectacle or the thoughts of death. And, recollecting it, I am struck with the truth, that far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, pass to us as *involutes* (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us *directly*, and in their own abstract shapes. It had happened, that amongst our vast nursery collection of books was the Bible illustrated with many pictures. And in long dark evenings, as my three sisters with myself sat by the firelight round the *guard* * of our nursery, no book was so much in request amongst us. It ruled us and swayed us as mysteriously as music. Our younger nurse, whom we all loved, would sometimes, according to her simple powers, endeavour to explain what we found obscure. We, the children, were all constitutionally touched with pensiveness ; the fitful gloom and sudden lambencies of the room by firelight suited our evening state of feelings ; and they suited, also, the divine revelations of power and mysterious beauty which awed us. Above all, the story of a just man—man and yet *not* man, real above all things, and yet shadowy above all things—who had suffered the passion of death in Palestine, slept upon our minds like early dawn upon the waters. The nurse knew and explained to us the chief differences in oriental climates ; and all these differences (as it happens) express themselves, more or less, in varying relations to the great accidents and powers of summer. The cloudless sunlights of Syria—those seemed to argue everlasting summer ; the disciples plucking the ears of corn—that *must* be summer ; but, above all, the very name of Palm Sunday (a festival in the English Church) troubled me like an anthem. “ Sunday ! ” what was *that* ? That was the day of peace which masked another peace deeper than the heart of man can comprehend. “ Palms ! ” what were

* “ *The Guard* ” :—I know not whether the word is a local one in this sense. What I mean is a sort of fender, four or five feet high, which locks up the fire from too near an approach on the part of children.

they? *That* was an equivocal word; palms, in the sense of trophies, expressed the pomps of life; palms, as a product of nature, expressed the pomps of summer. Yet still even this explanation does not suffice; it was not merely by the peace and by the summer, by the deep sound of rest below all rest and of ascending glory, that I had been haunted. It was also because Jerusalem stood near to those deep images both in time and in place. The great event of Jerusalem was at hand when Palm Sunday came; and the scene of that Sunday was near in place to Jerusalem. What then was Jerusalem? Did I fancy it to be the *omphalos* (navel) or physical centre of the earth? Why should *that* affect me? Such a pretension had once been made for Jerusalem, and once for a Grecian city; and both pretensions had become ridiculous, as the figure of the planet became known. Yes; but if not of the earth, yet of mortality, for earth's tenant, Jerusalem, had now become the *omphalos* and absolute centre. Yet how? There, on the contrary, it was, as we infants understood, that mortality had been trampled under foot. True; but, for that very reason, there it was that mortality had opened its very gloomiest crater. There it was, indeed, that the human had risen on wings from the grave; but, for that reason, there also it was that the divine had been swallowed up by the abyss; the lesser star could not rise, before the greater should submit to eclipse. Summer, therefore, had connected itself with death, not merely as a mode of antagonism, but also as a phenomenon brought into intricate relations with death by scriptural scenery and events.

Out of this digression, for the purpose of showing how inextricably my feelings and images of death were entangled with those of summer, as connected with Palestine and Jerusalem, let me come back to the bedchamber of my sister. From the gorgeous sunlight I turned round to the corpse. There lay the sweet childish figure; there the angel face; and, as people usually fancy, it was said in the house that no features had suffered any change. Had they not? The forehead, indeed—the serene and noble forehead—*that* might be the same; but the frozen eyelids, the darkness that seemed to steal from beneath them, the marble lips, the stiffening hands, laid palm to palm, as if repeating the supplications of closing anguish—could these be mistaken for life? Had it been so, wherefore did I not spring to those heavenly lips with

tears and never-ending kisses? But so it was *not*. I stood checked for a moment; awe, not fear, fell upon me; and, whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow—the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries. Many times since, upon summer days, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn, Memnonian,* but saintly swell: it is in this world the one great *audible* symbol of eternity. And three times in my life have I happened to hear the same sound in the same circumstances—namely, when standing between an open window and a dead body on a summer day.

Instantly, when my ear caught this vast Æolian in-

* "*Memnonian*":—For the sake of many readers, whose hearts may go along earnestly with a record of infant sorrow, but whose course of life has not allowed them much leisure for study, I pause to explain—that the head of Memnon, in the British Museum, that sublime head which wears upon its lips a smile co-extensive with all time and all space, an Æonian smile of gracious love and Panlike mystery, the most diffusive and pathetically divine that the hand of man has created, is represented on the authority of ancient traditions to have uttered at sunrise, or soon after as the sun's rays had accumulated heat enough to rarify the air within certain cavities in the bust, a solemn and dirge-like series of intonations; the simple explanation being, in its general outline, this—that sonorous currents of air were produced by causing chambers of cold and heavy air to press upon other collections of air, warmed, and therefore rarified, and therefore yielding readily to the pressure of heavier air. Currents being thus established, by artificial arrangements of tubes, a certain succession of notes could be concerted and sustained. Near the Red Sea lie a chain of sand hills, which, by a natural system of grooves inosculating with each other, become vocal under changing circumstances in the position of the sun, etc. I knew a boy who, upon observing steadily, and reflecting upon a phenomenon that met him in his daily experience—viz., that tubes, through which a stream of water was passing, gave out a very different sound according to the varying slenderness or fulness of the current, devised an instrument that yielded a rude hydraulic gamut of sounds; and, indeed, upon this simple phenomenon is founded the use and power of the stethoscope. For exactly as a thin thread of water, trickling through a leaden tube, yields a stridulous and plaintive sound compared with the full volume of sound corresponding to the full volume of water—on parity of principles, nobody will doubt that the current of blood pouring through the tubes of the human frame will utter to the learned ear, when armed with the stethoscope, an elaborate gamut or compass of music recording the ravages of disease, or the glorious plenitudes of health, as faithfully as the cavities within this ancient Memnonian bust reported this mighty event of sunrise to the rejoicing world of light and life—or, again, under the sad passion of the dying day, uttered the sweet requiem that belonged to its departure.

tonation, when my eye filled with the golden fulness of life, the pomps of the heavens above, or the glory of the flowers below, and turning when it settled upon the frost which overspread my sister's face, instantly a trance fell upon me. A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up for ever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft for ever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but *that* also ran before us and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on for ever and ever. Frost gathering frost, some Sarsar wind of death seemed to repel me; some mighty relation between God and death dimly struggled to evolve itself from the dreadful antagonism between them; shadowy meanings even yet continue to exercise and torment, in dreams, the deciphering oracle within me. I slept—for how long I cannot say; slowly I recovered my self-possession; and, when I woke, found myself standing, as before, close to my sister's bed.

I have reason to believe that a *very* long interval had elapsed during this wandering or suspension of my perfect mind. When I returned to myself, there was a foot (or I fancied so) on the stairs. I was alarmed; for, if anybody had detected me, means would have been taken to prevent my coming again. Hastily, therefore, I kissed the lips that I should kiss no more, and slunk, like a guilty thing, with stealthy steps from the room. Thus perished the vision, loveliest amongst all the shows which earth has revealed to me; thus mutilated was the parting which should have lasted for ever; tainted thus with fear was that farewell sacred to love and grief, to perfect love and to grief that could not be healed.

O, Ahasuerus, everlasting Jew! * fable or not a fable, thou, when first starting on thy endless pilgrimage of woe—thou, when first flying through the gates of Jerusalem, and vainly yearning to leave the pursuing curse behind thee—couldst not more certainly in the words of Christ have read thy doom of endless sorrow, than I when passing for ever from my sister's room. The worm was at my heart; and, I may say, the worm that could not die. Man is doubtless *one* by some subtle *nexus*, some system of links, that we cannot perceive, extending from the new-born infant to the superannuated dotard: but, as

* "*Everlasting Jew*":—*der ewige Jude*—which is the common German expression for "*The Wandering Jew*," and sublimer even than our own.

regards many affections and passions incident to his nature at different stages, he is *not* one, but an intermitting creature, ending and beginning anew; the unity of man, in this respect, is co-extensive only with the particular stage to which the passion belongs. Some passions, as that of sexual love, are celestial by one-half of their origin, animal and earthly by the other half. These will not survive their own appropriate stage. But love, which is *altogether* holy, like that between two children, is privileged to revisit by glimpses the silence and the darkness of declining years; and, possibly, this final experience in my sister's bedroom, or some other in which her innocence was concerned, may rise again for me to illuminate the clouds of death.

On the day following this which I have recorded, came a body of medical men to examine the brain, and the particular nature of the complaint; for in some of its symptoms it had shown perplexing anomalies. An hour after the strangers had withdrawn, I crept again to the room; but the door was now locked, the key had been taken away—and I was shut out for ever.

Then came the funeral. I, in the ceremonial character of *mourner*, was carried thither. I was put into a carriage with some gentlemen whom I did not know. They were kind and attentive to me; but naturally they talked of things disconnected with the occasion, and their conversation was a torment. At the church, I was told to hold a white handkerchief to my eyes. Empty hypocrisy! What need had *he* of masks or mockeries, whose heart died within him at every word that was uttered? During that part of the service which passed within the church, I made an effort to attend; but I sank back continually into my own solitary darkness, and I heard little consciously, except some fugitive strains from the sublime chapter of St. Paul, which in England is always read at burials.*

Lastly came that magnificent liturgical service which the English Church performs at the side of the grave; for this church does not forsake her dead so long as they continue in the upper air, but waits for her last "sweet and solemn † farewell" at the side of the grave. There is

* First Epistle to Corinthians, chap. xv., beginning at verse 20.

† This beautiful expression, I am pretty certain, must belong to Mrs. Trollope; I read it, probably, in a tale of hers connected with the backwoods of America, where the absence of such a farewell

exposed once again, and for the last time, the coffin. All eyes survey the record of name, of sex, of age, and the day of departure from earth—records how shadowy! and dropped into darkness as if messages addressed to worms. Almost at the very last comes the symbolic ritual, tearing and shattering the heart with volleying discharges, peal after peal, from the final artillery of woe. The coffin is lowered into its home; it has disappeared from all eyes but those that look down into the abyss of the grave. The sacristan stands ready with his shovel of earth and stones. The priest's voice is heard once more—*earth to earth*—and immediately the dread rattle ascends from the lid of the coffin; *ashes to ashes*—and again the killing sound is heard; *dust to dust*—and the farewell volley announces that the grave, the coffin, the face are sealed up for ever and ever.

Grief! thou art classed amongst the depressing passions. And true it is that thou humblest to the dust, but also thou exaltest to the clouds. Thou shakest as with ague, but also thou steadiest like frost. Thou sickenest the heart, but also thou healest its infirmities. Among the very foremost of mine was morbid sensibility to shame. And, ten years afterwards, I used to throw my self-reproaches with regard to that infirmity into this shape—viz., that if I were summoned to seek aid for a perishing fellow-creature, and that I could obtain that aid only by facing a vast company of critical or sneering faces, I might, perhaps, shrink basely from the duty. It is true that no such case had ever actually occurred; so that it was a mere romance of casuistry to tax myself with cowardice so shocking. But, to feel a doubt, was to feel condemnation; and the crime, that *might* have been, was in my eyes the crime that *had* been. Now, however, all was changed; and for anything which regarded my sister's memory, in one hour I received a new heart. Once in Westmoreland I saw a case resembling it. I saw a ewe suddenly put off and abjure her own nature, in a service of love—yes, slough it as completely as ever serpent sloughed his skin. Her lamb had fallen into a deep trench, from which all escape was hopeless without the aid of man. And to a man she advanced, bleating clamorously, until he followed her and rescued her beloved. Not less was the change in myself. Fifty

must unspeakably aggravate the gloom at any rate belonging to a household separation of that eternal character occurring amongst the shadows of those mighty forests.

thousand sneering faces would not have troubled me *now* in any office of tenderness to my sister's memory. Ten legions would not have repelled me from seeking her, if there had been a chance that she could be found. Mockery! it was lost upon me. Laughter! I valued it not. And when I was taunted insultingly with "my girlish tears," that word "*girlish*" had no sting for me, except as a verbal echo to the one eternal thought of my heart—that a girl was the sweetest thing which I, in my short life, had known—that a girl it was who had crowned the earth with beauty, and had opened to my thirst fountains of pure celestial love, from which, in this world, I was to drink no more.

Now began to unfold themselves the consolations of solitude, those consolations which only I was destined to taste; now, therefore, began to open upon me those fascinations of solitude which, when acting as a co-agency with unresisted grief, end in the paradoxical result of making out of grief itself a luxury; such a luxury as finally becomes a snare, overhanging life itself, and the energies of life, with growing menaces. All deep feelings of a *chronic* class agree in this, that they seek for solitude, and are fed by solitude. Deep grief, deep love, how naturally do these ally themselves with religious feeling! and all three—love, grief, religion—are haunters of solitary places. Love, grief, and the mystery of devotion—what were these without solitude? All day long, when it was not impossible for me to do so, I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds about the house or in the neighbouring fields. The awful stillness oftentimes of summer noons, when no winds were abroad, the appealing silence of grey or misty afternoons—these were fascinations as of witchcraft. Into the woods, into the desert air, I gazed, as if some comfort lay hid in *them*. I wearied the heavens with my inquest of beseeching looks. Obstinate I tormented the blue depths with my scrutiny, sweeping them for ever with my eyes, and searching them for one angelic face that might, perhaps, have permission to reveal itself for a moment.

At this time, and under this impulse of rapacious grief, that grasped at what it could not obtain, the faculty of shaping images in the distance out of slight elements, and grouping them after the yearnings of the heart, grew upon me in morbid excess. And I recall at the present moment one instance of that sort, which may show how merely

shadows, or a gleam of brightness, or nothing at all, could furnish a sufficient basis for this creative faculty.

On Sunday mornings I went with the rest of my family to church : it was a church on the ancient model of England, having aisles, galleries,* organ, all things ancient and venerable, and the proportions majestic. Here, whilst the congregation knelt through the long litany, as often as we came to that passage, so beautiful amongst many that are so, where God is supplicated on behalf of "all sick persons and young children," and that he would "show his pity upon all prisoners and captives," I wept in secret ; and raising my streaming eyes to the upper windows of the galleries, saw, on days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld. The *sides* of the windows were rich with storied glass ; through the deep purples and crimsons streamed the golden light ; emblazonries of heavenly illumination (from the sun) mingling with the earthly emblazonries (from art and its gorgeous colouring) of what is grandest in man. *There* were the apostles that had trampled upon earth, and the glories of earth, out of celestial love to man. *There* were the martyrs that had borne witness to the truth through flames, through torments, and through armies of fierce, insulting faces. *There* were the saints who, under intolerable pangs, had glorified God by meek submission to his will. And all the time, whilst this tumult of sublime memorials held on as the deep chords from some accompaniment in the bass, I saw through the wide central field of the window, where the glass was *uncoloured*, white, fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky ; were it but a fragment or a hint of such a cloud, immediately under the flash of my sorrow-haunted eye, it grew and shaped itself into visions of beds with white lawny curtains ; and in the beds lay sick children, dying children, that were tossing in anguish, and weeping clamorously for death. God, for some mysterious reason, could not suddenly release them from their pain ; but he suffered the beds, as it seemed, to rise slowly through the clouds ; slowly the beds ascended into the chambers of the air ; slowly, also, his arms descended from the heavens, that he and his young children,

* "*Galleries*":—These, though condemned on some grounds by the restorers of authentic church architecture, have, nevertheless, this one advantage—that, when the *height* of a church is that dimension which most of all expresses its sacred character, galleries expound and interpret that height.

whom in Palestine, once and for ever, he had blessed, though they *must* pass slowly through the dreadful chasm of separation, might yet meet the sooner. These visions were self-sustained. These visions needed not that any sound should speak to me, or music mould my feelings. The hint from the litany, the fragment from the clouds—those and the storied windows were sufficient. But not the less the blare of the tumultuous organ wrought its own separate creations. And oftentimes in anthems, when the mighty instrument threw its vast columns of sound, fierce yet melodious, over the voices of the choir—high in arches, when it seemed to rise, surmounting and overriding the strife of the vocal parts, and gathering by strong coercion the total storm into unity—sometimes I seemed to rise and walk triumphantly upon those clouds which, but a moment before, I had looked up to as mementos of prostrate sorrow; yes, sometimes under the transfigurations of music, felt of grief itself as of a fiery chariot for mounting victoriously above the causes of grief.

God speaks to children, also, in dreams, and by the oracles that lurk in darkness. But in solitude, above all things, when made vocal to the meditative heart by the truths and services of a national church, God holds with children “communion undisturbed.” Solitude, though it may be silent as light, is, like light, the mightiest of agencies; for solitude is essential to man. All men come into this world *alone*; all leave it *alone*. Even a little child has a dread, whispering consciousness, that, if he should be summoned to travel into God’s presence, no gentle nurse will be allowed to lead him by the hand, nor mother to carry him in her arms, nor little sister to share his trepidations. King and priest, warrior and maiden, philosopher and child, all must walk those mighty galleries alone. The solitude, therefore, which in this world appals or fascinates a child’s heart, is but the echo of a far deeper solitude, through which already he has passed, and of another solitude, deeper still, through which he *has* to pass:—reflex of one solitude—prefiguration of another.

O, burden of solitude, that cleavest to man through every stage of his being! in his birth, which *has* been—in his life, which *is*—in his death, which *shall* be—mighty and essential solitude! that wast, and art, and art to be; thou broodest, like the Spirit of God moving upon the surface of the deeps, over every heart that sleeps in the nurseries of Christendom. Like the vast laboratory of the air,

which, seeming to be nothing, or less than the shadow of a shade, hides within itself the principles of all things, solitude for the meditating child is the Agrippa's mirror of the unseen universe. Deep is the solitude of millions who, with hearts welling forth love, have none to love them. Deep is the solitude of those who, under secret griefs, have none to pity them. Deep is the solitude of those who, fighting with doubts or darkness, have none to counsel them. But deeper than the deepest of these solitudes is that which broods over childhood under the passion of sorrow—bringing before it, at intervals, the final solitude which watches for it, and is waiting for it within the gates of death. O, mighty and essential solitude, that wast, and art, and art to be, thy kingdom is made perfect in the grave; but even over those that keep watch outside the grave, like myself, an infant of six years old, thou stretchest out a sceptre of fascination.

LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW

OFTENTIMES at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have much leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the new-born infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness,—typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmosphere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. But immediately, lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana, or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps, in his heart, “Behold what is greater than yourselves!” This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare*, to raise aloft.

. This is the explanation of Levana, and hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a prefigurative or mimic degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore watches over human education. Now the word *edūco*, with the penultimate short, was derived (by a process often exemplified in the crystallisation of languages) from the word *edūco*,

with the penultimate long. Whatever *educes*, or developes, *educates*. By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant,—not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars, but by that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works for ever upon children,—resting not night or day, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering * for ever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief. But you, reader! think,—that children are not liable to such grief as mine. There are two senses in the word *generally*—the sense of Euclid, where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and in a foolish sense of this word, where it means *usually*. Now, I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are more than you ever heard of who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules of Eton require that a boy on the *foundation* should be there twelve years: he is superannuated at eighteen, consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief; but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than have ever been counted amongst its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake a man's heart: therefore it is that she dotes on grief. "These ladies," said I softly to myself, on seeing the ministers with whom Levana was conversing, "these are the Sorrows; and they are three in number,

* As I have never allowed myself to covet any man's ox nor his ass, nor anything that is his, still less would it become a philosopher to covet other people's images or metaphors. Here, therefore, I restore to Wordsworth this fine image of the revolving wheel and the glimmering spokes, as applied by him to the flying successions of day and night. I borrowed it for one moment in order to point my own sentence; which being done, the reader is witness that I now pay it back instantly by a note made for that sole purpose. On the same principle I often borrow their seals from young ladies, when closing my letters, because there is sure to be some tender sentiment upon them about "memory," or "hepe," or "roses," or "reunion," and my correspondent must be a sad brute who is not touched by the eloquence of the seal, even if his taste is so bad that he remains deaf to mine.

as the *Graces* are three, who dress man's life with beauty ; the *Parcæ* are three, who weave the dark arras of man's life in their mysterious loom, always with colours sad in part, sometimes angry with tragic crimson and black ; the *Furies* are three, who visit with retribution called from the other side of the grave offences that walk upon this ; and once even the *Muses* were but three, who fit the harp, the trumpet, or the lute, to the great burdens of man's impassioned creations. These are the Sorrows, all three of whom I know." The last words I say *now* ; but in Oxford I said, " One of whom I know, and the others too surely I *shall* know." For already, in my fervent youth, I saw (dimly relieved upon the dark background of my dreams) the imperfect lineaments of the awful Sisters.

These Sisters—by what name shall we call them ? If I say simply, " The Sorrows," there will be a chance of mistaking the term ; it might be understood of individual sorrow,—separate cases of sorrow,—whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart ; and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations, that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions pointing to flesh. Let us call them, therefore, *Our Ladies of Sorrow*.

I know them thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household ; and their paths are wide apart ; but of their dominion there is no end. Them I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then ? O, no ! mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves there is no voice nor sound ; eternal silence reigns in *their* kingdoms. *They* spoke not, as they talked with Levana ; *they* whispered not ; *they* sang not ; though oftentimes methought they *might* have sung, for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure, not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. *They* wheeled in mazes ; *I* spelled the steps. *They* telegraphed from afar ; *I* read the signals. *They* conspired together ; and on the mirrors

of darkness *my* eye traced the plots. *Theirs* were the symbols ; *mine* are the words.

What is it the Sisters are ? What is it that they do ? Let me describe their form, and their presence : if form it were that still fluctuated in its outline, or presence it were that for ever advanced to the front, or for ever receded amongst shades.

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation,—Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever, which, heard at times as they tottered along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven.

Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns ; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This Sister, the eldest, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring-time of the year, and whilst yet her own Spring was budding, he recalled her to himself. But her blind father mourns for ever over *her* ; still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own ; and still he wakens to a darkness that is *now* within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* has also been sitting all this winter of 1844–5 within the bed-chamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of the keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides a ghostly intruder into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her,

because she is the first-born of her house, and has the widest empire, let us honour with the title of "Madonna!"

The second Sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum*—Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban, droops for ever, for ever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister, Madonna, is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But our Lady of Sighs never clamours, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest. This sister is the visitor of the Pariah, of the Jew, of the bondsman to the oar in the Mediterranean galleys; and of the English criminal in Norfolk Island, blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England; of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes for ever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar overthrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no oblations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother, but for *him* a stepmother,—as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against *him* sealed and sequestered;—every woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsman, whom God will judge; every captive in every dungeon; all that are betrayed and all that are rejected outcasts by

traditionary law, and children of *hereditary* disgrace,—all these walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also carries a key ; but she needs it little. For her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem, and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest walks of man she finds chapels of her own ; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, who yet secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third Sister, who is also the youngest——! Hush, whisper whilst we talk of her ! Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh could live ; but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele, rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not ; and her eyes rising so high *might* be hidden by distance ; but, being what they are, they cannot be hidden ; through the treble veil of crape which she wears, the fierce light of a blazing misery, that rests not for matins or for vespers, for noon of day, or noon of night, for ebbing or for flowing tide, may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She is also the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power ; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions : in whom the heart trembles, and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest Sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with tiger's leaps. She carries no key ; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And *her* name is *Mater Tenebrarum*—Our Lady of Darkness.

These were the *Semnai Theai*, or Sublime Goddesses,* these were the *Eumenides*, or Gracious Ladies (so called by antiquity in shuddering propitiation), of my Oxford dreams. Madonna spoke. She spoke by her mysterious hand. Touching my head, she said to Our Lady of Sighs ; and *what* she spoke, translated out of the signs which (except in dreams) no man reads, was this :—

* "*Sublime Goddesses*" :—The word *σεμνος* is usually rendered *venerable* in dictionaries,—not a very flattering epithet for females. But I am disposed to think that it comes nearest to our idea of the *sublime*,—as near as a Greek word *could* come.

“Lo ! here is he, whom in childhood I dedicated to my altars. This is he that once I made my darling. Him I led astray, him I beguiled, and from heaven I stole away his young heart to mine. Through me did he become idolatrous ; and through me it was, by languishing desires, that he worshipped the worm, and prayed to the wormy grave. Holy was the grave to him ; lovely was its darkness ; saintly its corruption. Him, this young idolator, I have seasoned for thee, dear gentle Sister of Sighs ! Do thou take him now to *thy* heart, and season him for our dreadful sister. And thou,”—turning to the *Mater Tenebrarum*, she said,—“wicked sister, that temptest and hatest, do thou take him from *her*. See that thy sceptre lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope, wither the relenting of love, scorch the fountain of tears, curse him as only thou canst curse. So shall he be accomplished in the furnace, so shall he see the things that ought not to be seen, sights that are abominable, and secrets that are unutterable. So shall he read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths. So shall he rise again *before* he dies, and so shall our commission be accomplished which from God we had,—to plague his heart until we had unfolded the capacities of his spirit.”

SAVANNAH-LA-MAR

GOD smote Savannah-la-Mar, and in one night, by earthquake, removed her, with all her towers standing and population sleeping, from the steadfast foundations of the shore to the coral floors of the ocean. And God said:—"Pompeii did I bury and conceal from men through seventeen centuries: this city will I bury, but not conceal. She shall be a monument to men of my mysterious anger, set in azure light through generations to come; for I will enshrine her in a crystal dome of my tropic seas." This city, therefore, like a mighty galleon with all her apparel mounted, streamers flying, and tackling perfect, seems floating along the noiseless depths of ocean; and oftentimes in glassy calms, through the translucent atmosphere of the water that now stretches like an air-woven awning above the silent encampment, mariners from every clime look down into her courts and terraces, count her gates, and number the spires of her churches. She is one ample cemetery, and *has* been for many a year; but, in the mighty calms that brood for weeks over tropic latitudes she fascinates the eye with a *Fata-Morgiana* revelation, as of human life still subsisting in submarine asylums sacred from the storms that torment our upper air.

Thither, lured by the loveliness of cerulean depths, by the peace of human dwellings privileged from molestation, by the gleam of marble altars sleeping in everlasting sanctity, oftentimes in dreams did I and the Dark Interpreter cleave the watery veil that divided us from her streets. We looked into the belfries, where the pendulous bells were waiting in vain for the summons which should awaken their marriage peals; together we touched the mighty organ keys, that sang no *jubilates* for the ear of heaven, that sang no requiems for the ear of human sorrow; together we searched the silent nurseries where the children were all asleep, and *had* been asleep through five generations. "They are waiting for the heavenly dawn," whispered the Interpreter to himself: "and, when *that* comes, the bells

and the organ will utter a *jubilate* repeated by the echoes of Paradise." Then, turning to me, he said,—“This is sad, this is piteous; but less would not have sufficed for the purpose of God. Look here. Put into a Roman clepsydra one hundred drops of water; let these run out as the sands in an hour-glass, every drop measuring the hundredth part of a second, so that each shall represent but the three-hundred-and-sixty-thousandth part of an hour. Now, count the drops as they race along; and, when the fiftieth of the hundred is passing, behold! forty-nine are not, because already they have perished, and fifty are not, because they are yet to come. You see, therefore, how narrow, how incalculably narrow, is the true and actual present. Of that time which we call the present, hardly a hundredth part but belongs either to a part which has fled, or to a future which is still on the wing. It has perished, or it is not born. It was, or it is not. Yet even this approximation to the truth is *infinitely* false. For again subdivide that solitary drop, which only was found to represent the present, into a lower series of similar fractions, and the actual present which you arrest measures now but the thirty-sixth-millionth of an hour; and so by infinite declensions the true and very present, in which only we live and enjoy, will vanish into a mote of a mote, distinguishable by a heavenly vision. Therefore the present, which only man possesses, offers less capacity for his footing than the slenderest film that ever spider twisted from her womb. Therefore also this incalculable shadow from the narrowest pencil of moonlight is more transitory than geometry can measure, or thought of angel can overtake. The time which *is* contracts into a mathematical point; and even that point perishes a thousand times before we can utter its birth. All is finite in the present; and even that finite is infinite in its velocity of flight towards death. But in God there is nothing finite; but in God there is nothing transitory; but in God there *can* be nothing that tends to death. Therefore it follows that for God there can be no present. The future is the present of God, and to the future it is that he sacrifices the human present. Therefore it is that he works by earthquakes. Therefore it is that he works by grief. O, deep is the ploughing of earthquake! O, deep”—(and his voice swelled like a sanctus rising from the choir of a cathedral)—“O, deep is the ploughing of grief! But oftentimes less would not suffice for the agriculture of

God. Upon a night of earthquake he builds a thousand years of pleasant habitations for man. Upon the sorrow of an infant he raises oftentimes from human intellects glorious vintages that could not else have been. Less than these fierce ploughshares would not have stirred the stubborn soil. The one is needed for Earth, our planet,—for Earth itself as the dwelling-place of man ; but the other is needed yet oftener for God's mightiest instrument,—yes," (and he looked solemnly at myself), "is needed for the mysterious children of the Earth !"

THE END

PRINTED BY
CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED
LONDON, E.C.



